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AND HUMAN LIVING

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*Collaborators*

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KATHERINE W. TAYLOR

# PSYCHOLOGY and HUMAN LIVING

By WALTER C. LANGER

*For the*  
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS



*New York*  
D. APPLETON-CENTURY COMPANY  
INCORPORATED

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## P R E F A C E

*Psychology and Human Living* is one of a series of books presented by the Commission on Human Relations of the Progressive Education Association. This Commission was charged with the responsibility of helping young people and their parents to understand and to do something about the complex problems of human relations today. It is our hope that the combined materials offered in the series of books will build toward insight into and comprehension of human behavior in such way that the present younger generation may create more humane and workable designs for living than have their elders.

This book was written by a psychologist who has had extensive experience in helping people, young and old, to understand their problems. The book was not easy to write. It has been in the process of making and remaking for several years. The realm of psychology is vast. Its history is now replete with theories and approaches. Its case material is endless. The major task of the author was one of selection, out of the many possible approaches and out of the welter of material, of those theories that would be useful in everyday life. This presentation, therefore, deals with the theory of "needs" and consistently presents a dynamic view of human behavior and human destiny.

The human being is at once the thing we know most about—and least about. As the last pages of this book point out, man has conceived and executed gigantic monuments to his intelligence. On one day he bombs Tokyo, on the next he receives an award at the White House. Man has whittled distances down to sheer threads. But the distance between people in the realm of understanding remains unbridged. Else how could we direct our amazing ingenuity to our own destruction? We know how to fly to Africa in a few short hours. But in several generations we have not come to know and appreciate the peoples of Africa.

If we study the dynamics of our own needs, our own psychological behavior, we may begin to unravel the reasons for these strange inconsistencies in human progress. This study is not easy. As you move through the pages of this book there will be new terms, new expressions, new ideas. They are unfamiliar to most of our present ways of thought. It will be well to ponder over certain ideas, discuss them in class and with friends, read good novels that reveal the lives of people, and look around! Too many of us are "isolationists"—folks who are so concerned with our own little personal world that we don't see the person across the room from us. That person may be lonely, may be eager to share thoughts and feelings. In the sharing, ideas clarify and sensitivity deepens.

But it is difficult. This will not be an easy book to read. It will not be an easy task to remake our world and lift the level of social conscience. But who said we were looking for anything easy? Our forefathers faced a frontier of forests, rivers, and the cruelty of physical pain and privation. We face an equally difficult frontier of building new pathways for man's understanding. If the dreams of "liberty, equality, and fraternity," and "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" are to be realized, we must take the hard way, too. We must clear the forests of intolerance, dam the torrents of hatred, build the houses of peace, and write the constitution of affection. The ideal makes any effort worth the cost!

ALICE V. KELIHER, *Chairman*



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PSYCHOLOGY  
AND HUMAN LIVING



# 1

## CULTURAL PATTERNING OF BELIEFS

MAN's chief concern in life is *man*. Wherever else our interest may carry us, this primary concern always hovers in the background and plays an important rôle in our thinking. Very often we ourselves may be entirely unaware of the presence of this concern and the influence it has upon us. An individual may even deny its existence in himself. He may tell us that he hates people and has not the slightest interest in them or their affairs. Apparently, all he wants is to be left alone. This is, of course, a very extreme point of view and at first glance seems to cast doubt on the truth of the opening statement. But if we investigate such an attitude more closely we invariably find that the person holding such a view is deeply concerned about himself and his relations with other people. His attitude is based on the belief that his own interests and welfare are furthered most by establishing this particular type of relationship between himself and his fellows. He is, nevertheless, just as interested in his own welfare and the effects of his behavior on other people as his more positively inclined neighbor who frankly asks himself: "What effect will this proposed course of action have on the welfare of mankind? How will it affect me personally? How will it affect my group? Is it the type of conduct that I would wish my fellows to adopt as a general practice? Where would it

eventually lead?" In either case the undercurrent of our thinking and conduct will be concerned with our welfare and our relations to other people. To further these in whatever ways seem most feasible to us as individuals is our chief and most fundamental concern in life.

¶ *We are all students of the psychology of human conduct.*

The things that concern us most are, therefore, our relationships with other people. Successful behavior is often taken for granted by ourselves and others. We are more familiar with our behavior whenever it bothers us and others. That is why we turn our attention first to those experiences known so well by everybody. Whenever we discover that our behavior in some way jeopardizes a valued relationship or hinders it from developing in an acceptable way, we strive to change. Sometimes this is relatively easy, and we do it without much thought or effort. At other times, however, our behavior seems to persist. We can see the problem clearly, are agreeable to a modification, and make every effort to change; yet we are unable to do so. The undesirable behavior persists in spite of us.

With observation we may detect many forms of persistent, undesirable behavior. Johnnie, for example, is troubled about his finger-nail-biting. He has tried and tried to stop it. As long as he keeps his mind on it alone, he is able to keep from doing it, but the moment he turns his attention to something else—there it is. It worries him no end. His parents scold him; his friends ridicule him. As far as he can tell, he gets no pleasure from it. On the contrary, it seems to bring him nothing but misery. The habit disgusts him and prevents him from cultivating harmonious relations with the people around him. But all his attempts to correct it seem to fail.

In the classroom Mary blushes whenever she takes part in discussion. Her many original ideas are unshared with her classmates because she dreads the embarrassment of blushing. Peggy also has ideas to contribute, but she cannot express them effectively. Long after they are needed, the words she wanted come to her. In everyday conversation too, she is reticent, but later witty replies throng into her mind. Bob never finishes his homework though he reads rapidly and intelligently. Why? Because despite his family's urging and repeated warnings from school, he persists in putting off his homework until late in the evening.

Then there is Freddie. He cannot understand why he should continually lie when it would be much simpler to tell the truth. Tom cannot understand why he picks fights with the very boys he wants as friends. And Helen cannot keep herself from spreading every bit of gossip she hears even though she knows everybody regards her as a tattle-tale. Jim cannot refrain from taking things even though he does not need them. And so the list can go on and on—different people trying to eliminate or modify different types of behavior that annoy themselves and others and hinder their social development.

We all struggle with such problems at one time or another. We all recognize certain shortcomings in our psychological make-ups, and we strive to overcome them in various ways. Sometimes we succeed. The unwanted pattern of behavior disappears with relatively little effort. At other times we struggle and struggle. We try one technique of correction after another, and yet the habit persists. In some instances the behavior seems to become our master. We are constantly on guard against it. It robs us of our confidence in ourselves and undermines our happiness, and we ask ourselves over and over again, "Why do I do it? What can I do to control it?" This search for causes and controls forms

the very core of every scientific approach. When we apply the attitude of research to human behavior, we must become students of the psychology of human conduct.

§ *Our interest in human conduct is not limited to ourselves, alone, but carries over into the social groups with which we associate.*

To gain control over our own behavior is one of the chief prerequisites for personal happiness. We cannot be happy if every closet holds a potential skeleton for us. We cannot achieve happiness so long as we feel ourselves slaves to hidden impulses. To be happy we must be able to feel that we can meet the world on its terms and still carry off the cherished prizes. Such a feeling is unattainable as long as there are traitors and "fifth-columnists" within ourselves.

Although the feeling of internal harmony and self-assurance is a prerequisite, it is not the sole determinant of happiness. None of us lives in a vacuum. None of us faces the world alone or would really want to do so. We are born into a social group, the family, and continue to live, throughout our lives, in social groups of varying sizes. We are, therefore, constantly exposed to the behavior of other people. Their behavior has a very definite influence upon our own well-being. It sometimes furthers our own development and offers gratification to our wishes and desires, and at other times hinders the attainment of these goals. This is particularly true during infancy and early childhood when we are completely dependent upon the people in our social environment. Our physical as well as our psychological well-being is in their hands. If we are to be happy, we must learn at a very early age to cultivate relationships with others and restrain tendencies that may jeopardize such relationships.

Our happiness, however, is not dependent on favorable relationships with other people solely during childhood.



True happiness at any age can best be attained through the establishment of satisfactory relationships with other people. Only through such relationships can we achieve a maximum of self-expression and self-realization. Our task becomes even more difficult as we grow older. Not only must we learn to eradicate patterns of behavior that are distasteful to ourselves, but we must also learn to adapt our behavior to that of other people in order that necessary and desirable relations with them may be established, maintained, and cultivated to their fullest extent.

This is not always easy. Frequently fruitful relationships of this kind are hindered because the other person involved possesses traits or habits that we consider undesirable, injurious, or even intolerable. Thus an association which is beneficial on one side may prove to be harmful on the other side, especially if we happen to be the objects of unfavorable behavior. We are, then, in a conflict. Should we continue the relationship or break it off? Often we adopt the latter course on the supposition that the disadvantages outweigh the advantages to be gained. This is possible when the relationship is of a superficial nature as, for example, between acquaintances or casual friends. We avoid intimate contacts with such persons in the future and consider the incident closed.

But there are situations in which the conflict cannot be resolved so easily. When the beneficial elements in a relationship are great, we cannot discard it without hurting ourselves. Under these circumstances we often regard the continuance of the relationship as the lesser of two evils. We "put up" with the other person's undesirable behavior in order to hold on to the things we like about him. It is not pleasant, to be sure, and the relationship never bears the fruit which it could if it were warm and congenial. Since it is to our own interest to cultivate such a relationship to the

maximal degree, we are confronted with the questions, "Why does he or she behave in this way?" and "What can I do to change his or her behavior in such a way that it will fit in more nearly with my own ideas and interests?" In asking these questions we are again assuming the rôle of students in the psychology of human conduct. We are again inquiring into the origin and nature of behavior and seeking ways and means of controlling it.

¶ *This universal interest in the nature and origins of human conduct and in its manipulation is not a recent development.*

All the information that modern investigators have been able to unearth indicates that the problem of human conduct and its control is as old as man himself. The oldest records of early civilizations as well as a study of primitive societies, both past and present, reveal that this problem has always been one of man's primary concerns. Wherever people formed into a group for the purpose of mutual living, the problem arose, and measures were taken to alter undesirable or unacceptable patterns of behavior in individual members and bring them into conformity with the rest of the group. It is, however, impossible to initiate corrective measures unless one has some theory concerning the nature and causation of the thing to be changed.

To most of us our present view of the nature and causation of human behavior, and our ways of modifying it, seems to be natural. To many, in fact, it seems perfectly obvious that behavior must be the way it is because they cannot imagine acting in any other way. But there are styles in thinking, believing, and behaving as there are styles in dress and customs. If you look at your family album and see how your mother dressed when she was young or how your grandmother and grandfather dressed when they were married,

you are highly amused. "How in the world," you ask yourself, "could these people ever think of wearing such atrocious clothes?" They were not, however, thought to be "atrocious" at the time. To the people of that era the styles seemed natural and obvious; not only that, but they were thought to be just as pretty and attractive as we now believe our modern styles to be. The chances are that thirty or forty years from now our children and grandchildren will laugh at our present-day costumes just as we laugh at those of our forefathers. We become accustomed to whatever happens to be in style and regard it as the natural, common-sense, and obvious view and then judge alternatives in terms of it. The alternatives invariably suffer by comparison.

The same thing happens when we travel into foreign countries. We are amused by the strange dress of other people, and although we may be ready to admit that they look pretty or cute, we still regard our own clothes as superior for practical purposes, and there are few of us who would care to trade costumes for any length of time. We view other people's customs, ideals, and ways of doing things in the same light. We look at them from the viewpoint of the things to which we are accustomed, and usually the unaccustomed appears to be inferior and less natural. What we fail to realize is that all these things which seem so strange and unnatural to us are quite right and proper to the people living in the particular culture group in which they are found. It is just as difficult for them to understand our tastes, ideals, and practices as it is for us to understand theirs. And furthermore, they tend to regard our way of doing things as inferior to their own just as we apply this same judgment to theirs. In short, owing to some mysterious psychological processes, we tend to judge the customs, standards, and beliefs of the culture group of which we are a part as natural,

right, and superior. It is as though every culture equips its individual members with spectacles through which everything in that particular culture appears to be bigger and better, while everything in other cultures is diminished and made to appear inferior.

The importance of these cultural inferences with regard to our customs and beliefs cannot be overemphasized. No other single factor in the history of thought has had such a retarding influence. As long as we are sure that we are right to begin with, there is no incentive to examine other possibilities which, if investigated, might prove highly advantageous to our well-being. This is just what has happened over and over again in connection with theories of human conduct. Each culture and each era have blindly accepted the beliefs current at the time to be the only right and true ones. In the firm conviction that they were right and that they understood everything that one needs to know about human conduct and its causation, they offered explanations that seem weird and incredible to us at the present time. And yet we must not forget that to the people who believed in them the explanations must have seemed just as right, proper, and obvious as our modern theories seem to us today.

To guard more effectively against prejudiced attitudes toward other cultures of the present or past, let us review briefly a few of the more important beliefs that our ancestors have held and their effect upon our present-day cultural view of human conduct and social living.

§ *Primitive man peopled the world with "spirits" and regarded them as responsible for, or the cause of, all phenomena.*

It is astonishing to find that primitive man almost everywhere in the world came to similar conclusions concerning

the ultimate causation of external events. Tribes which had no contact with each other and could not have known what the others were thinking or believing to account for observable phenomena formulated theories which were almost identical except for names. For our purpose, therefore, we can treat the many theories as one and note the important characteristics that predominated in them all. The common theory is known as the "spirit" theory, and it is still to be found among almost all the primitive people living in the world today. No other theory has ever held such widespread popularity, endured unchanged for an equal length of time, or retarded progress more seriously.

According to the "spirit" theory, all phenomena were caused by the action of unseen "spirits." If a rock tumbled down the side of a mountain, the event was attributed to the action of a "spirit" who deliberately rolled it down. A cloud drifted across the sky not because of air currents due to variations in the density of the air in neighboring localities, but because a "spirit" was pushing the cloud around. The rustling of a tree, the babbling of the brook, the movement of the sun, and the arrival of the rain were only to be understood in terms of "spirits" who were residing in the objects and were producing these effects.

This is a naïve theory built, we may suppose, on man's discovery that events do not happen without some cause. His observations had led him to conclude that inanimate objects do not ordinarily move of their own accord. If he wished to have a certain rock in a particular place, the rock resisted his wishes until he actually moved it. Sometimes all the strength that he could muster was not sufficient to induce the rock to change its location. From such observations primitive man concluded that if left to themselves all inanimate objects would quietly remain where they were. Everyday observation, however, taught him that in-

animate objects do move and, since no person could be seen who was doing the moving, the movement must be due to an invisible something possessing power not unlike his own. This invisible something he called a "spirit."

The "spirit" theory was convenient and effective. No matter what happened one could always explain its occurrence in terms of "spirits" who were bringing about the observed effect. There was the authority of personal experience behind the theory, and it could not easily be disproved. The invisible "spirits" flitted from one object to another and performed all kinds of incredible deeds. The explanation was so simple, so plausible, and so comprehensive that everybody accepted it uncritically. The world was filled with "spirits," and every event was due to their action. Primitive man was satisfied. The theory gave him the feeling that he understood the world in which he lived and that there was no necessity for seeking more adequate causal principles. The concept of "spirit" formed the basis of all his thinking.

¶ *Primitives regarded man's behavior in the same way and attributed it to the action of "spirits" that were not an integral part of him.*

The "spirit" theory also covered all of man's behavior. As long as an individual's behavior was just average for the tribe, his fellow-men evidently did not wonder much about the nature of his motivations. But as soon as he did anything unusual, then the "spirit" theory was brought into play. If the individual's actions contributed to the welfare of the tribe or were beneficial to one of his fellow-tribesmen, then it was no longer the individual who was doing these good deeds but a "good spirit" which had slipped into the individual's body and was causing him to behave in this manner. If, however, an individual's behavior violated the

mores (obligatory customs) of the tribe or was harmful to one of its members, then the actions were attributed to an "evil spirit" residing in his body. The worst characteristic of these "spirits" was that they would not stay in one object for any length of time. They were always flitting around, lodging first in one object or person and then in another, using whatever happened to serve their interests best at the moment.

The transitory nature of "spirits" made the world a very uncertain place to live in. One never could tell in advance whether a given object was the hiding place of a "good spirit" or an "evil" one. The same was true of people. Imagine yourself living in a world in which you had to be suspicious of every object and person. Even your parents and best friends could not be wholly exempted. It is true that these people usually behaved in such a way as to indicate that the "spirit" residing in them had kindly intentions toward you, but you never could tell when this "good spirit" might be dislodged. A new "spirit" might have hostile intentions toward you and cause your parent or friend to turn upon you in rage and attempt to destroy you.

The chief difficulty was that the nature of the "spirit" in any given object or person could not be determined until it was too late to do anything about it. Only after an event had taken place could one determine the kind of "spirit" that had brought it about. But that did not help so far as the future was concerned because at the very next moment, according to the theory, another one of an infinite number of "spirits" might take over and cause the object or person to act in an entirely different way. The result was that no prediction was possible, and primitive man had to be constantly on his guard against a myriad of unseen forces. A feeling of security, under these circumstances, must have been extremely difficult to attain.

§ *Primitive man attempted to control his environment and his behavior by enlisting the aid of other "spirits."*

Our beliefs concerning the origins and motivations of behavior determine, for the most part, the measures we adopt to offset undesirable effects. And so it was with primitive man. Having surrounded himself with a legion of "spirits" of his own creation which were responsible for everything that happened, he then had to find some way of controlling them for his own ends. How was this to be done? We have seen that the abode of "spirits" was transitory. They inhabited one body after another according to their own whims. Thinking of his imaginary "spirits" as invisible beings, primitive man nurtured those objects in which he believed a "good spirit" was residing. He wanted to make the object a pleasant home for the "spirit" in order that it would have no inclination to go elsewhere. All kinds of objects that housed "good spirits" were collected and carefully placed in his hut or carried on his person as amulets or charms. These were his protectors! While he was kind to the "good spirits," they would be kind to him and ward off any "evil spirits" that sought to enter his body or do him injury. To the more powerful "spirits" he made all kinds of sacrifices in an effort to appease them and keep them kindly disposed toward him and to his tribe.

Living in such an insecure world made social solidarity of the utmost importance to primitive man. Only by conforming whole-heartedly to the mores of the tribe and merging himself with the group could he win any feeling of support and confidence. The preservation of the integrity of the group and his complete acceptance by it were essential to the individual and meant that he not only had to



exert every effort to keep "evil spirits" out of his own body but also out of those of other members of the tribe.

But in spite of all precautions and ceremonials an "evil spirit" would, now and then, slip into the body of an individual and cause him to act contrary to the tribal customs. The tribe regarded this as a menace to its welfare, and ridding the individual of the "spirit" became a tribal affair. The afflicted individual was not blamed for his conduct. An "evil spirit" made him do what he was doing and had to be evacuated in order that a "good spirit" might enter his body and make the individual behave in a social way. The problem was to induce the "spirit" to leave. Objects containing "good spirits" were brought and placed in the hut of the afflicted one in the hope that combined might would be sufficient to drive the "evil spirit" from the vicinity. Ceremonials were performed whose purpose was to induce more powerful "good spirits" to come to the aid of the tribe and rid it of this invader who threatened its safety. The assistance of the tribal Medicine Man, who was supposed to have special influence with "spirits," was employed.

When all of these methods failed to dislodge the unwelcome "spirit," the individual was subjected to various forms of abuse. This was not retribution for crimes committed. Its sole purpose was to make the body of the individual an uncomfortable and unpleasant abode for the "spirit." If uncomfortable enough, the "spirit" would, it was believed, be glad to leave and seek more pleasant quarters elsewhere. From insults and indignities the abuses progressed through starving and floggings. After all this, if the "spirit" still refused to be evicted, large quantities of blood were drawn from the afflicted individual's body in the hope that the "spirit" might be drained off in the process!

This type of thinking and acting seems strange to us who

live in a scientific age and hold very different beliefs. We wonder how man could ever have been so stupid, how he could have subjected his fellow-men to such atrocious treatment on the strength of an erroneous theory. And yet that is the way in which cultures make the thinking of their members run in channels. The primitives were so sure they were right that few ever thought of questioning their system of beliefs. When missionaries and others tried to point out the errors in their thinking and to show them more scientific ways of dealing with phenomena, the primitives fled from the vicinity. They were sure these well-meaning people were themselves filled with an "evil spirit" that sought to corrupt the tribe. It is safe to say that no bonds ever held man tighter than these cultural bonds which shackled his thinking through many centuries and prevented him from viewing himself and the world in a more objective and constructive manner.

Nor are we entirely free from it today. Beliefs very similar to those of the "spirit" theory are found in many of our children and among grown-ups. How often do we attribute events in the external world to "luck"? How many of us still carry "good luck" pieces, charms, or amulets of one kind or another on our person in the belief that they will keep away misfortune? How many of us still believe that it is unlucky to walk under a ladder or to have a black cat cross our paths? How many of us still believe that to find a four-leaf clover or a horseshoe means that the natural course of events will, in some mysterious way, be altered and that, in consequence, good fortune will fall upon us? Is there any fundamental difference between such beliefs and those held by primitive man? Very little! He called these whimsical forces *spirits*; we call them *luck*. And how often do we blame "bad luck" for our own shortcomings? The "spirit" theory is not yet dead. It still lives among us and walks side

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by side with our scientific thinking. Whenever we are off our guard, it is apt to sneak into our thinking in the form of "luck" explanations or superstitions. It remains an important type of cultural thinking which we must combat if we are to attain a better understanding of human living.

## 2

### THEORIES OF THE PAST

¶ *Man finally freed himself from the belief that external phenomena were caused by "spirits."*

AFTER many centuries we have succeeded in freeing ourselves, to some extent, from the belief that extranatural forces operating in an unpredictable manner are responsible for the occurrence of external phenomena. From time to time heroic individuals dared to question religious dogmas, traditions, and current beliefs and to inquire more fully into the nature of the world in which man lived. They were the pioneers of modern science, exposed in their day to ridicule and persecution and regarded as heretics and corruptors of the social order. As the work progressed, personal prejudices, cultural biases, ill-founded theories, uncritical concepts, and unwarranted assumptions were successfully banned from their investigations. They tried to discover what actually caused certain phenomena rather than to substantiate preconceived notions. Conscientious study of this kind by thousands of workers over generations has given us our modern objective sciences. We have gained a control over nature that is nothing short of remarkable.

¶ *But man failed to include himself in this category.*

Unfortunately, man's understanding of man has not kept pace with scientific development. Although man reluc-

tantly relinquished his belief that "spirits" of extranatural forces were responsible for external events, he was unwilling to do as much for himself. It is true that as the centuries wore on, his beliefs did undergo some degree of modification. This modification, however, was largely in terms of number rather than in fundamental nature. The "spirits" of the primitive were gradually amalgamated into a number of gods who motivated the actions of men and used them for their own purposes. Ancient Greek mythology, with its galaxy of gods on Mount Olympus, furnishes an excellent example of this system of beliefs.

Early Christianity taught belief in two extranatural forces—"good" and "evil." If man's thoughts and actions were in strict conformity with the group patterns, he was being motivated by "good." On the other hand, if his beliefs and actions varied from these accepted patterns, one could be sure that "evil" was causing him to deviate from the "righteous" path. Man continued to be a toy in the hands of great forces external to himself—an automaton guided by unseen hands.

### § *The rôle of the "will" in Puritan thinking.*

Parallel to the concept of "good" and "evil" is the concept of the "will." We find discussions of the "will" in the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, in Medieval and Renaissance theology. But the concept does not seem to have played a conspicuous rôle in cultural thinking until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this country the change may be seen in the beliefs of the Puritans. According to early theories man had little control over the forces that were to motivate his behavior. A force entered his body and caused him to perform certain actions, leaving again when it felt inclined to do so. Evil lurked at every corner, awaiting the opportunity to lead a man into mischief and sin. Privations,

sacrifices, ceremonials—every possible means was employed to ward off “evil.” Puritan thinking did away with this system of beliefs. According to Puritanism, man could choose between “good” and “evil,” and his future behavior would reflect his choice. If he lived the “good” life, that is, a social and unselfish one, it meant that he had chosen to affiliate himself with God. On the other hand, if his behavior was unsocial and selfish, he had cast his lot with Satan.<sup>1</sup> In other words, there was something inherent in man himself that made the choice between these alternative modes of conduct. This “something” they called the “will.” The acceptance of the “will” concept was a distinct contribution to a more wholesome view of man and his behavior. It raised man from the rank of toy and placed a part of his destiny in his own hands.

### § *What are our beliefs today?*

Our cultural thinking today has not progressed very far beyond the Puritan stage. True, we have to a large degree given up the belief that our conduct is entirely the direct outcome of extranatural forces working through us. Nowadays we tend to think of motivations within ourselves. This is certainly a step in the right direction and brings man within the realm of subjects fit for scientific study. But what is the nature of these motivations? Where do they come from and how do they operate? Most of us have not the vaguest idea. In general our culture adheres to a concept of opposing forces. Man is a two-sided creature as far as the

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<sup>1</sup> In Stephen Vincent Benét's story, "The Devil and Daniel Webster," Jabez Stone made a bargain with the devil in the person of Mr. Scratch. His bargain brought him riches to spare, but it heaped misfortunes upon his neighbors and unhappiness upon his family. You will enjoy this modern allegory of the nineteenth-century farmer who cast his lot with Satan for its artistry and imagination as well as for its interpretation of a now obsolete theory of human conduct.

forces that motivate his behavior are concerned. On the one hand, he is supposed to have a "good" side to his nature that tends to guide his behavior into culturally accepted channels. This side recognizes duties, loyalties, generosity, and self-sacrifice; it yearns for the "higher" things of life. On the other hand, he is also supposed to have within himself a side that is "bad." The "bad" side is primarily unsocial and selfish. It rebels against the demands made upon the individual by the group and prefers the easy and unrestrained path, the "primitive" and "animalistic" pleasures.

These two sides of man's nature, so it is generally believed, are opposed to each other, and man's job, as he grows up, is to crush the "bad" side and give free play to the "good." In other words, he has a choice of motivations. He may lead an unsocial life and indulge himself in pleasurable actions and give free rein to his "passions," or he may deny these demands and recognize only the tendencies that contribute to the welfare of the group and his own standing in it. His "will" must choose between these two alternatives.

When we look at our current system of beliefs in this way, we see how little we have advanced from the days of our Puritan forefathers. The "good" and the "evil" are still battling for the control of man's behavior and trying to lead him in opposite directions. The fundamental criterion by which his motivation and the resultant actions are judged is in terms of the present cultural patterns and not in terms of his own native capacities. The choice is still made by something inherent in himself which we call the "will." Everything matches except that the "good" and the "evil" are here conceived to be a part of man's nature rather than outside forces.

Our system of punishment, our entire legal machinery, is based upon this theory. We do not really ask why a particular individual has committed unsocial acts. We assume

that he did so of his own free "will" and accord. The individual has simply failed to see the great benefits and pleasures to be derived from living in harmony with the social pattern and consequently has chosen the less arduous and more primitive way of gratifying his desires. In order to influence his choices in the future we, therefore, heap punishments upon him which are designed to make the unsocial road less pleasant, less easy, and less satisfying. Behind these punishments lies the secret hope that if the individual can be forced, through pain and fear, to leave the road of unsocial behavior, he will discover that social living yields the greater and more lasting pleasures and that he will, consequently, choose the social way, the "right" way, voluntarily in the future.

§ *What is the evidence in favor of this theory of human conduct?*

The evidence in favor of the "will" theory is almost wholly confined to everyday experience. If we stop and examine our own psychological processes in a situation in which we are tempted to perform an unsocial act, but hesitate to do so, we will find an interesting sequence of thoughts. Suppose that you are in a situation in which you could steal a considerable amount of money without any great danger of being caught. Something inside you says, "Look at all that money and nobody is watching. It is very foolish for people to leave money lying around like that." A second voice says to you, "Pay no attention to it." But the first side will not ignore it and says, "If I had that money, I could buy those new skis I have wanted for so long." The second voice replies, "No, you mustn't. It wouldn't be honest." The first replies rather scornfully, "Oh, honesty! Who cares about being honest? What did honesty ever get



anybody? I have wanted a new pair of skis for months and Dad won't give me the money and I can't get a job and earn any. These people have plenty and they won't know the difference." The second voice cautions, "You might get caught." But the first voice scoffs at this, "There is nobody around to see, and they will certainly never suspect me of taking it. It would be a cinch." The second voice replies, "Yes, they would not suspect you because they trust you. Would you want to violate that trust?" The first voice answers weakly, "But they would never know." And the second replies, "But it wouldn't be right." And so the argument continues when suddenly a third voice, which sounds more like your own everyday voice, steps in and categorically decides the matter with the assertion: "No! I won't take the money. I would rather get along without the skis." When this decision is made, the temptation is successfully resisted, and you continue on your way without further hesitation.

Every one has had experiences like this. The mind is almost like a court-room in which two claimants appear before a judge and argue their respective cases. The judge listens to the evidence of both sides and then gives a verdict in favor of one or the other. Within our minds, however, it seems as though the claimants are always the same. One advocates behavior that promises quick and easy returns, but is contrary to the accepted cultural patterns. The other advocates behavior that is culturally acceptable, conservative, and yields less tangible but more durable rewards. And the judge actually seems to be an integral part of you which has the final word on the conduct you adopt. We refer to this judging function as the "will." Sometimes the choice between the alternatives is easy since the advantages to be gained by one course far outweigh those of the other. At other times, when the advantages and disadvantages are

almost equally balanced, a decision may be very difficult to reach. At such times the court-room scene stands out most clearly.

We can say, therefore, that personal experience and an observation of our own psychological processes fully corroborate the "will" theory of human conduct. Is this evidence sufficient? Can we simply drop further research in this important field because the process seems so obvious? Can obviousness be used as an infallible criterion of the truth or falsity of a theory?

These questions can, perhaps, be answered best by an illustration from another field. For thousands of years man took it for granted that the sun moved while the earth remained stationary. Experience and observation told him it must be so. In primitive times he thought that a "spirit" pushed the sun across the sky each day, and, later, that Apollo drove across the sky in his fiery chariot. Still later the sun became in man's belief a celestial body that revolved around the earth. All this had to be so because it seemed so. Man was standing still, and the sun was moving across the sky. But further research proved this time-worn theory to be completely wrong. Things were not as they appeared. Only after an entirely new point of view was adopted could any great advances be made in understanding the nature of the universe and our place in it. The same state of affairs may exist in connection with our inner life.

§ *Does the "will" theory really help us to understand the dynamics of human behavior? Does it tell us anything we do not already know?*

In everyday life we seem to muddle along fairly well on this concept of human conduct. Our thinking along these lines has been patterned so thoroughly by our culture that we use the terms of these theories glibly and seem to know

what we are saying. Only very rarely do we stop to consider the meaning of these terms and their implications. For example, what do we mean by the "good" and the "bad" sides of man's nature? If we look at other cultures, we find that what is considered "good" in one culture is considered "bad" in another. The result is that in one cultural setting a behavior pattern would be motivated by the "bad" side of man's nature and would be punishable, whereas in another cultural setting exactly the same pattern would be motivated by the "good" side and be rewarded. The "good" and "bad" sides of man's nature are, therefore, not constant throughout the world but vary from culture to culture together with the judgments of "right" and "wrong" that we usually attach to them. The behavior attributed to each side is culturally determined and is not a characteristic inherent in the behavior itself. To say, therefore, that a form of behavior is "wrong" or was motivated by the "bad" side is equivalent to saying that it was contrary to the accepted patterns of our culture which we knew to begin with. We might just as well say that the behavior was "unsocial" and let it go at that.

The same state of affairs exists in connection with the concept of the "will" itself. In everyday speech we speak of an individual as "weak-willed" or "strong-willed." We mean that the individual can or cannot guide his behavior in social channels and keep his unsocial tendencies in check. That is, an individual may be convinced that the social way is the best way and wish to follow it. Whether he does or not depends on something other than his intellectual conviction. To go back to the court-room scene for an illustration, the judge may listen to the evidence on both sides and give a verdict to the social side. Whether the unsocial side accepts this verdict and abides by it is a different story. Much will depend on the power vested in the judge to

carry out his decisions after he has made them. And so it is with the "will." It is one thing to "will" to do something and another thing to carry it out. The "will" must have "power" behind it and be able to enforce its decisions on the individual's behavior.

We are now confronted with the question, "Where does the 'will' get its 'power'?" Or we might ask even more pertinently, "Where does the 'will' come from, how does it operate, and what determines whether an individual is 'strong-willed' or 'weak-willed'?" We can only say that we do not know. We somehow assume that the "will" is innate in an individual and that some people are born with "strong" ones and others with "weak" ones. This is the same as saying that some people are endowed with tendencies which make it easy for them to live in accordance with the patterns of a given culture, whereas others are not. The "will" seems to be just as mythical and elusive as the "spirits" of primitive times.

We would also have to ask ourselves, "Is there any way in which a 'weak will' may be strengthened or is the 'weak-willed' individual forever condemned to be a victim of his weakness?" A definite answer to this question cannot be given so long as we have no real conception of what the "will" is or where it comes from.

### § *How many wills are there?*

The person who does not face extraordinary circumstances and is well balanced gets along in life by making decisions and following the preferred course of action. To test the adequacy of the "will" theory, notice the following examples of persons who have definite problems which they wish they could solve by "will power."

Consider Peggy whom we met briefly in the first chapter. Peggy has always thought that her marks in school and her

popularity outside suffer because of her reticence. In a word, she feels "tongue-tied." Pretty, graceful, she is a worthy opponent on a tennis court, but not in a debate or discussion, and she envies the chatterbox who can carry on witty if aimless conversation. The "will" to express herself is indeed strong. Peggy has read many a book on how to be popular and many a magazine article on personality. In her last year at high school she studied public speaking in an effort to solve her problem. Her performance in class improved when she conscientiously applied the rules of public speaking. But in social gatherings words still don't come when Peggy wants them; she thinks of the *bon mot* too late.

Jane is afraid of mice! A natural person, no other petty fears taunt her. But as long as she can remember, she has uttered a startled squeal whenever she sees a mouse. She knows the mouse is more frightened than she is. She knows her fear is silly; what's more, it's Victorian! The college catalogue seemed to offer a solution to her problem in the laboratory psychology course. Such a course, she believed, would not only explain her fear, but would include experiments with white mice. Jane's "will" was strong, but her remedy was not successful—she still squeals at the sight of a mouse.

How are we to understand such behavior in terms of the "will" theory? We could have considered Johnnie's nail-biting, Mary's blushing, Freddie's lying, or Jim's petty stealing. None of these boys and girls is a weakling. In every other phase of life these individuals seem to have an adequate supply of the mysterious something we call "will power." Frequently it seems that a person is deficient or ineffectual in only one area of his behavior. Are we to conclude that the "will" is a single faculty or function with a certain amount of "power" at its disposal as we usually assume? Apparently not. If the "will" is not a unity, we are

then faced with the problem, "How many 'wills' are there, and what determines their relative strength or weakness?" It would seem that there must be an almost infinite number of "wills"—one to control conversational ability, another to control petty fears, others to prevent finger-nail-biting, blushing, stealing, and so on. This, of course, carries the theory to the point of absurdity. The term *will* loses its usefulness and meaning, and we return to the simple facts that Peggy feels tongue-tied and that Johnnie bites his finger-nails. The theory does not help us to understand the behavior or offer any remedies for undesirable traits and habits.

§ *Attempts have been made to apply the discoveries of other sciences to man's behavior.*

The successes achieved by the objective sciences in penetrating the secrets of nature were so noteworthy that many thinkers believed that they had found the key to the entire universe. Physics and chemistry, they thought, had made tremendous strides because they looked at the world in a purely mechanistic manner. Everything in the world was orderly; everything operated in a mechanical way; and everything was strictly determined. Chance was ruled out completely, and if one wanted to understand phenomena of a particular kind, one had only to discover the laws governing them to have an absolutely certain answer. Since this was true in the inorganic world, why could one not adopt the same point of view toward man and the organic world?

The reasoning seemed to be sound, and various attempts were made during the last century to view man as the result of a mechanical process. These attempts were not unfruitful. In biology, for example, laws governing heredity were discovered. These proved of tremendous value in understand-

ing the transmission of certain physical characteristics from one generation to another. This discovery in particular fired the imagination of the public. If physical characteristics are transmitted in this way, why not the psychological ones? This was certainly a legitimate problem for research, but the people did not wait for the results of such a slow process. They accepted the possibility as a proven fact and began to apply it indiscriminately. If Paul was unable to master his arithmetic problems, it was because his father could never do arithmetic, and Paul had inherited this characteristic from him. If Helen didn't like to do housework, it was because she "took after" her mother or her grandmother. And so on through the whole gamut of human behavior. The theory was all very simple and clear and had the added advantages of sounding very scientific and, also, of shifting the blame to somebody else.

§ *We must be careful to restrict the application of a theory to the phenomena covered by it.*

This type of thinking still prevails in our culture. Over and over again parents excuse their own shortcomings or those of their children on the basis of inheritance. It is unquestionably true that heredity does play an important rôle in determining some of our characteristics, but we must limit our application of any theory to those areas in which it has been shown to be valid. In the case of the laws of heredity the available evidence indicates that certain physical characteristics such as color of hair, color of eyes, and general physical build do follow a definite scheme. There is no evidence, however, that such psychological characteristics as arithmetical ability, love of housework, desire to steal, laziness, or any other patterns so often ascribed to heredity are really due to inborn factors.

It is true that we can find very striking resemblances in psychological characteristics between many parents and children. We can find families in which the sons follow directly in the footsteps of their fathers or daughters who are replicas of their mothers. From early childhood these children seem to be "chips off the old block." By the time they are half-grown, they act as their parents do, think as their parents do, and seem to possess the general abilities of their parents. When they are fully grown, they quite naturally slip into their parents' professions, enjoy the same hobbies, and seem to be second editions of their parents. Under these circumstances it is very easy to conclude that the offspring have inherited the psychological make-up of their parents. Cases of this kind are, however, relatively rare when we consider the population as a whole. They are the extreme cases that make the theory seem true. Most families show such a variety of traits and attitudes in their children and also forms of behavior which have no forerunners that it is hard to believe that psychological make-up is determined by heredity alone. The only proof that traits are not fixed by heredity is to show that they can be altered.

It is difficult to understand how the theory of heredity of psychological traits was able to take such a firm hold on the cultural thinking. It may be, as we often find, that there is a common tendency to overemphasize the importance or the frequency of those cases that fit a theory we would like to believe is true, and to minimize the number of cases which do not fit. Whatever the reason, we can safely say that the bulk of the available evidence casts serious doubts on the validity of this theory when applied to psychological characteristics. If psychological traits are inherited at all, they certainly do not follow the laws that govern the transmission of physical traits.



§ *"Human nature" is another one of our cultural explanations of human behavior.*

Closely allied to the heredity theory, is another theory that man inherits certain tendencies that in turn motivate his conduct. According to this line of thought, it is "human nature" to want to fight; it is "human nature" to be jealous; it is "human nature" to want to marry and settle down; it is "human nature" to want to be popular with one's fellows; it is "human nature" to want to excel; and so on. In other words, "human nature" is thought of as some mysterious kind of force which motivates these different types of behavior. It is something inherent in the individual—an endowment he cannot escape or modify. To be "human" is to behave in these prescribed ways, and there is nothing to be done about it except to accept it and make the most of it.

But is this a sound scientific hypothesis? Does it explain anything, or are we again covering our ignorance with a high-sounding label—a cultural pattern of thought—which has no real basis? If we survey the behavior of peoples living in other societies, our theory meets an obstacle almost immediately. We find peoples who can scarcely be driven to fight even under aggravating circumstances. We find others who care not at all for money or personal possessions. We find others who do not show jealousy as we know it, who frown upon an individual who wishes to excel, who care little for popularity, and so on. In the light of such evidence we must conclude that these people are not human beings since they do not exhibit the behavior associated with "human nature," or else that "human nature" varies from one group of people to another.

The first of these alternatives verges on the absurd. No anthropologist would dare maintain that simply because a

group did not behave in these particular ways, it must be excluded from membership in the human species. The second alternative has more supporters. There are people who believe that the fundamental nature of different peoples is different and that their widely varying behavior patterns are to be accounted for on this basis. Without becoming deeply involved in this argument we may point out two major factors that discredit such a conclusion. The first is that our experience here in America is quite the contrary. In the course of time members of widely different cultures have settled in the United States. In most cases a few generations have been sufficient to obliterate the patterns of the original culture, and the descendants of these settlers behave and think like other Americans. We call this "the process of Americanization." Surely we cannot believe that being born on American soil alone could bring about a change in the fundamental nature of these people.

The second consideration is even more compelling. It is based on the fact that among our own people we can find any number of individuals who do not exhibit the forms of behavior we ascribe to human nature—individuals who shun riches, fighting, popularity, and what not. Are we to assume that nature has played a trick and endowed these people with a "human nature" different from that of most of us? Under the circumstances it seems more logical to suppose that fundamental human nature is very much the same the world over and that the differences found among people must be accounted for in some other way.

When we glance at various kinds of behavior commonly attributed to "human nature," we find that the list is composed of all the patterns of behavior dominant in our own particular culture. Are there any forms of behavior included that are not commonly found among us? Is it not probable, then, that our thinking about "human nature"

is a pattern of thought determined by our culture just as our tastes, our ideas of beauty, our conception of "good" and "evil," and so on are culturally determined? To say, then, that a certain kind of behavior is "human nature" is synonymous with saying that it is common in our cultural group and no more. This is certainly no real explanation in the scientific sense of the term.

¶ *We do not know what kinds of behavior are natural to the human species.*

If we are going to be scientific in our approach to the problem of human conduct, we must learn to be honest with ourselves. Frankly, we do not know what kinds of behavior are really *natural* to the human species. We are all born into some kind of cultural group and are exposed to its influences from the day of our birth. These influences shape the behavior of the individual in subtle ways so that by the time he reaches maturity we can have no idea of what he would have been like had these influences been absent. The few exceptions to this rule are the "wild children" who have occasionally been found in different regions of the world. As far as we can tell, some of these children were lost at a very early age and managed to survive without the assistance of other human beings. The influences of an ordinary social environment were, therefore, lacking in the course of their development. We might assume that the behavior of these "wild children" would yield the most valuable data available on the behavior patterns arising from fundamental human nature. Unfortunately, the study of these children yields little information that helps us to understand human conduct as we know it. In general, it may be said their behavior resembled that of apes more nearly than that of man in everyday life. Judged by our ordinary standards they were extremely stupid. Of the cases found, only a very few

who were subjected to special training methods were able to learn to take care of themselves or to perform simple routine tasks. They were unable to learn a human language by means of which they could communicate to us something of their inner life or earlier experiences. To make bad matters worse, most of them died in a relatively short time when they were subjected to the living conditions of civilized man.

The result is that we have been unable to learn very much about fundamental human nature from the individuals who presumably exemplify it in its basic form. The one thing we have learned, however, is that their behavior is far different from any form of behavior which we commonly ascribe to "human nature." Under these circumstances it seems wise to drop the concept of human nature, at least as an explanatory concept, from our present scientific considerations. It seems to be an empty label that contributes nothing to our understanding of human conduct and serves only to confuse the subject-matter of our investigations by introducing culturally determined prejudices into our thinking. Let us avoid, if possible, the error of jumping at preconceived notions concerning the very thing we set out to understand.

¶ *We can learn very little from these current beliefs which will help us in controlling or shaping human conduct.*

As we examine these current beliefs regarding the origins and nature of human behavior, we must marvel at the popularity these beliefs enjoy when, in reality, they offer so little. That, of course, is often true of culturally patterned thinking. The names and labels intrigue us. They give us an air of wisdom and furnish us with tools with which to conceal

our ignorance. Sometimes it looks as though we would rather cling to them and gain these benefits than to examine them carefully for fear we might discover how little we really know.

There is one interesting element in all of these beliefs which should not escape us. They all tend to shift the blame to some cause other than man or his culture. Primitive man shifted the responsibility for behavior to "spirits" over which he had only an imaginary control. The Ancient blamed a multitude of gods and tried to control them through appeasement. During the early Christian Era man still attributed his behavior to extranatural forces in the form of "good" and "evil." Here, too, there was little that man could do to control his behavior except to avoid one and embrace the other. Later the element of "free will" was reintroduced. The extranatural forces remained, but man could choose between them. He had a "will" of his own which could make the choice. But was he really free in his choice? He was free only insofar as his "will" was free. As we have seen, we know little or nothing about the origin and nature of the "will." All we know is that its function is to choose, but why some "wills" prefer to choose one way while others prefer the opposite way remains an unsolved mystery. We can only suppose, from the theory, that we are all more or less the victims of the "will" we were born with and pursue the destiny charted for it. And so again we are relieved of the ultimate responsibility for what we do since there seems to be little that can be done to change it. In this and later beliefs, the motivators of behavior cease to be extranatural forces, but man is hardly any better off. He is born, so many people still believe, with a two-sided nature, one of which is "bad" and "animalistic" whereas the other is "good" or "spiritual." He must choose between the two.

Again he has no control over the relative strengths of these two opposing sides or over the "will" whose function it was to choose between their respective demands.

The pseudo-scientific theories also allowed man to escape responsibility for his behavior. According to the "heredity" hypothesis, no matter what our psychological characteristics may be we cannot be praised or blamed for their presence since we had no part in their making. If we are not all that we should be, our fathers or forefathers are to blame. Nor can we do anything to change this unhappy state of affairs. We either have the desirable characteristics, or we don't have them. If we have them and don't want them or we want them and don't have them, we must pine away our lives in vain, or blame our ancestors for the injustices they have perpetrated upon us. But there is no way of changing our characteristics. We might just as well try to change the color of our eyes or the size of our ears.

The same is true of the "human nature" theory. Man is supposedly born with certain tendencies which he did not choose. His species is to blame, and there is nothing that he can do to change it. The result is that if it is "human nature" to want to fight and make war, as we are told, then there is nothing that man can do except to follow his nature and make war on others from time to time as the inner demands arise. Under these circumstances one can scarcely hold man responsible for his actions. He is only living out his fundamental nature, and there is nothing to do but put up with it. If some of these tendencies are detrimental to his welfare or retard progress, we can only wait for evolution to produce a human species in which this tendency is lacking.

Certainly these views are fatalistic and destructive. Man is reduced, over and over again, to a state of helplessness—a toy in the hands of blind and unknown forces. And yet he strives and hopes that somehow or other he can win

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some control over himself and make the world a better place in which to live. Lacking a constructive theory of human conduct, man flounders, wondering what to do and how to do it. Fundamentally, his attempts at correction or modification are probably no more successful today than were those of the primitive who tortured the individual in order to evict the "evil spirit" residing in his body.

It is time that we were jolted from this state of dogmatic slumber. It is time that we examined the roots of our smugness and discovered how insecure they really are. And it is time that we tried to find out what makes us go and what we can do to control it. Only in this way can we help ourselves and make man's lot in the world a better one.

# 3

## BEGINNING AT THE BEGINNING: PHYSICAL NEEDS

¶ *The rise of a scientific attitude toward human conduct during the latter part of the last century.*

WITH continuous progress in other sciences man began to wonder more and more about himself and his own behavior. Scientifically-minded people became dissatisfied with the current beliefs concerning the nature and origins of behavior. If the objective sciences could unravel the mysteries of the external environment, why, they asked themselves, could not a new science unravel the mysteries of human conduct? Firm in their conviction that this was possible, scientists opened psychological laboratories in many of the great universities for the purpose of studying man and his reactions. Superstitions, unwarranted assumptions, and arm-chair speculations were banned. They wanted to begin at the beginning and base their theories and hypotheses on established facts rather than on fancies. These studies have continued up to the present time, and today every large university in the free world is participating in the search for causes of behavior and making contributions to our knowledge of man.

Experimental studies of human conduct have unearthed tremendous quantities of valuable information concerning man's reactions to his environment and the various psychological processes by which they are brought about. For the



most part, however, they have not enlightened us, to any great extent, on the problem of man's psychological development and why we are what we are or why we do what we do in everyday life. Their approach tended to regard man as a rather static organism equipped to respond to changes in his environment but with little initiative of its own. This attitude was almost inevitable as long as observations were restricted to man's reactions in a highly artificial laboratory situation in which he could only respond to specific stimuli or perform particular tasks that were assigned him. Such a procedure naturally failed to throw very much light on man engaged in the business of living or to give us a key to the understanding of the very complex forms of behavior characteristic of the human species.

#### ¶ *Psychoanalysis and the work of Freud.*

It was left to Dr. Sigmund Freud, of Vienna, to discover a new technique for investigating these problems. Dissatisfied with current beliefs concerning human conduct and our inability to deal with or understand unusual forms of behavior, he, too, decided to begin at the beginning. His beginning, however, did not carry him into the laboratory of the psychologist. He was a physician interested in the causation and cure of neurotic symptoms and nervous disease. His only laboratory was his consulting room, and his only subjects were the patients who came to him for help and relief. So he started his studies with a few individual patients. He was frank to admit that he did not know what was causing their disturbances, but if they were willing to coöperate with him, he would do his best to find out. Several patients accepted his offer, and for days and weeks and months he sat in his consulting room and listened to what they, themselves, had to say about their disorders. Thoughts, feelings, desires, past as well as present, were opened to in-

vestigation. The personal history of the individual passed in review as well as an examination of ideals, duties, loyalties, and ambitions which served as guides for conduct.

Gifted with extraordinary talents for grasping important details and piecing them together into a meaningful pattern, Freud gradually built up a conception of man's development in relation to his environment and culture. For fifty years he worked relentlessly in spite of hardships, insults, and ridicule inflicted by his colleagues. Like so many discoverers, he had to tolerate slanderous attacks from those whom he wished to teach but who preferred to cling to superstitions and outworn beliefs. His perseverance, however, did not go unrewarded. When he died in 1939, he left behind, as a monument, a new science of human conduct which he called *psychoanalysis*. Although still very young, this science has had a tremendous influence upon the course of every other social science. Psychology and medicine have been the greatest beneficiaries of Freud's work though anthropology and education have benefited almost as much.

We cannot review Freud's studies in detail in this book. Briefly, his theories evolved from his work with individual patients. Aside from his scientific studies, Freud was interested in developing techniques by which these patients could be given help in overcoming their difficulties of adjustment. Although he was successful in both directions, his theories and techniques are most valuable when used by an expert for the purpose of understanding the psychological development of a particular individual.

There are, however, broad implications that can be generally useful. Chief among these is his conception of man. Man, according to Freud, is a dynamic organism. That is to say, fundamental forces within man motivate him to make demands on his environment and to resist the demands the environment makes upon him. Life consists of

an endless struggle between these inner and outer forces. The individual is not always conscious of this struggle nor of the ends he is striving to attain. Behind the purely conscious part of the mind lies another part which Freud called the *unconscious* and which plays an important rôle in determining man's attitudes, ideals, duties, ambitions, wishes, thoughts, feelings, and behavior. This, in general, is hidden from the individual as well as from the world around him but we must understand it, too, if we wish to have a complete understanding of a man and his conduct.

¶ *The work of Murray.*

In recent years Dr. Henry A. Murray, working at the Harvard Psychological Clinic in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has attempted to bridge the gap existing between academic psychology and psychoanalysis. Using the fundamental conceptions of Freud as a basis, he, with a group of co-workers, has tried to perfect ways and means of exploring personality structure in a shorter length of time and in a larger number of subjects. He also worked to develop techniques by means of which the concepts could be tested experimentally and be more precisely defined. He hoped to build a theory of personality structure that could be more easily applied by the layman. It is this latter approach which we shall follow more closely in this book, although we shall draw freely on Freud's theories and findings. The two systems are fused together in order to give a fairly complete and comprehensive picture of personality structure and development as we understand it at the present time.

¶ *Beginning at the beginning.*

At the very outset of our study we must make certain assumptions common to all sciences which it will be well to keep in mind. The first is that every event must have a cause.

Nothing just happens. The second is that every movement or form of motion requires a certain expenditure of energy inasmuch as work (analogous to the definition of *work* in physics) must be done. The third is that this energy must be derived from natural forces acting in an orderly and lawful manner. All extranatural forces are rigidly barred from our scientific explanations as well as such unpredictable and disorderly "forces" as luck and chance. Only after all attempts to explain phenomena in terms of natural and lawful forces have failed are we entitled to resort to other speculations, and even then we will do well to make our judgments provisional, awaiting further knowledge or developments.

These are the fundamental tenets of every science. To them we might add a common scientific procedure, namely, that we begin with observations of the phenomena and the establishment of facts and proceed from there to theoretical considerations, and not vice versa. This may seem to be a superfluous admonition, and yet it has not been an uncommon psychological approach in the past. Too often the psychologist has sat in his study and devised a new theory of human behavior and then gone out into the world to discover facts that might be used in support of it. Therefore, let us seek the facts first and proceed to theoretical considerations later.

### § *We look at human behavior.*

What are the facts? When we survey the field of human behavior, we find that it seems to be composed of an infinite variety of patterns which, on the surface, seem to have little or no relationship with each other. No two people are behaving in the same way at any time, and the same individual behaves differently from one moment to the next. Nor can we observe anything in the environment that would account

for these wide variations in individual patterns. How, we may ask, is it possible to bring order and meaning into such a bedlam of phenomena?

Let us not lose heart. To the pioneers in modern science the external world must have seemed equally confusing and disorderly. Only by careful observation were they able to discover common elements in the phenomena involved which permitted a systematic classification as in astronomy or chemistry. Even then one classification after another had to be tried before one was discovered that led to a deeper understanding and could be linked into a meaningful relationship with others. Often, after researchers believed they had found the proper key, they discovered that their classification ended in a blind alley, and they were forced to reclassify the phenomena on a different basis. Every science, it seems, must travel this course. Sciences progress not only through new discoveries but also through the elimination and correction of earlier mistakes and errors.

Our first task, therefore, is to observe the behavior of people in everyday life and try to find a method of classification that will prove fruitful for a constructive theory concerning its underlying causes. We could start almost anywhere and search for common elements in behavior that would serve as a basis for classification. Usually, however, it is most profitable to begin with relatively simple and common forms since an understanding of these often yields clues by means of which the less common and more complicated forms can be classified and dealt with.

§ *An examination of food-taking and food-seeking behavior.*

Perhaps the type of behavior most common to man, as well as to all other animals, is finding and eating food. Nobody is exempt, for any appreciable length of time, from behavior

of this kind. Personal observation teaches us that we take food, or at least have a strong tendency to do so, when we are "hungry" and that this tendency is absent when we are not "hungry." In other words, everyday experience indicates that this type of behavior is intimately related to some condition existing within the organism itself and that the tendency to behave in this way is, in large part, independent of environmental changes.

The environment, however, determines whether the particular behavior, the act of food-taking, is feasible at the moment or whether it must be preceded by other forms of behavior that make the food-taking possible. Let us examine your behavior under these circumstances. In order to avoid all unnecessary cultural complications let us suppose that you are camping far from the outposts of civilization. You have spent the afternoon swimming in the cool waters of a near-by lake and suddenly realize that you are hungry. Food-taking behavior would be extremely pleasurable, but since you brought no lunch, you cannot indulge in it at the moment. Other forms of behavior are called for before food-taking behavior is possible. In the present situation these forms consist of picking up your things and initiating walking movements that carry you to your camp where food is stored. You are dismayed, however, when you arrive there to discover that during your absence some animal has raided your larder, and there is no food left. Again the environment is such that food-taking behavior is not feasible. Again other forms of behavior are demanded. You may sit down and try to forget your hunger, but as time passes, its demands become more acute and persistent. The sensations are unpleasant and more difficult to tolerate. You can no longer sit still. You are impelled to do something to procure food and allow you to get it into your stomach.

A great many different ways of behaving in an emergency

of this kind are at your disposal. You may pick up your tins and start hiking to the nearest house in order to purchase food from your neighbors. If the distance is great, however, this may not be a feasible way of meeting the situation. You may, then, pick up your gun and start out in search of game. You may hunt for bait and then take your fishing rod and go back to the lake and try your luck at catching fish. You may content yourself with picking berries in the neighboring hills. These are very diverse forms of behavior, but they all have a common goal, namely, to procure food.

We can learn a great deal from this simple example. *First*, an internal condition, which we ordinarily call *hunger*, is responsible for whatever behavior you initiate. If this condition were not present, you would not behave in this manner at this particular time. The demands made upon you are, therefore, independent of your external environment. The motivation comes from within yourself and not from outside. *Second*, the course of action you pursue will depend upon the nature of the environment in which you find yourself. If you are in rich berry country, you will probably institute behavior appropriate to berry-picking. If you are not very far from a neighboring house, you will probably go there and buy food. If you are in country where game is plentiful but fish are few, you will probably take your gun and go hunting. In short, your behavior will be determined in large part by the possibilities your environment offers. You will choose the behavior that holds the greatest promise and involves the least amount of effort. *Third*, if the environment offers various possibilities that are about equally feasible, your choice will be determined by your own capacities or abilities as demonstrated in earlier experiences. If the hunting and the fishing are about equally good in this locality, and you are a good hunter,

you will elect this alternative as a means of acquiring food. If you are a good fisherman but a poor hunter, you will elect the fishing alternative, and so on. *Fourth*, your choice of behavior will also depend, in part, on your personal likes and dislikes. You may be a good fisherman, but not like to eat fish, in which case you would probably elect to try your hand at hunting, berry-picking, or hiking even though it would require less effort to catch a few fish. *Fifth*, when the first choice fails to produce the desired results, you do not stop in your efforts. As long as the internal condition persists, you try one possibility after another and expend more and more energy in food-seeking behavior. Motivated by intense hunger, people frequently continue in their efforts to obtain food until they are completely exhausted. *Sixth*, there are a great many different objects which can, if taken into the stomach, satisfy your hunger even though some are preferable to others. You may have your heart set on a juicy venison steak, but if you fail to find a deer and bring him down, your demands become less exacting. You would then be content with a supper of wild turkey or squirrel or rabbit or whatever game you can find. If your attempts in this direction are unsuccessful, you are willing to consider fish even though you don't care for it. If these are unobtainable, you are quite happy to eat berries or anything else the environment can provide. In other words, we all have a list of food preferences. Those at the top of the list are most appetizing and tempting, but if they cannot be procured, we move down the list to less desirable substitutes. In extreme cases, such as those found among arctic explorers, men have been driven to slaughtering their dogs or chewing on their leather boots as a means of satisfying their hunger. We can add, *seventh*, that food-taking behavior ceases as soon as an adequate amount of food has been eaten.

There is little new in all this. Most of us are well ac-



quainted with these facts although we did not frame them concisely. In our civilized society, however, these reactions are, under ordinary circumstances, fairly well camouflaged. In our culture we usually do not wait until we are hungry before we think of food. We have learned, in the course of time, to plan ahead. From constant repetition we know we are going to be hungry at fairly regular intervals and that the best way of meeting these future situations is to have a supply of food at hand and have it prepared on a schedule in order that our inner demands may not become excessive. We guard against an unpleasant emergency of this kind by performing work for pay which, then, enables us to buy food when the proper time arrives. Nevertheless, with all these precautions, situations do arise in the lives of all of us that are similar enough to the one used in our example for us to check our conclusions regarding man's behavior under conditions of hunger. In the large cities where hunting, fishing, and other primitive forms of obtaining food are not feasible, however, we are more accustomed to find hungry men asking for any kind of work in return for food, begging for money on the streets with which to buy food, or stealing it when other methods fail. We also know that there are people in the large cities who are driven by their hunger to take scraps from garbage pails and eat foods hardly fit for human consumption. In times of war, also, people learn to eat and like many substitutes for the foods to which they are accustomed.

¶ *These findings can serve as the basis of a scientific approach to the problem of human behavior.*

When you hear your father going down to the kitchen late at night and hear him rattling the dishes in the refrigerator, you do not spend much time wondering why he is behaving in this way. Almost instantly the thought, "Dad must be

hungry," pops into your mind. And conversely, when he asserts that he is hungry, you are quite confident that it will not be long before he does something about it. We have, then, a two-way relationship. When we observe in an individual behavior that is designed to procure food objects and get them into his stomach, we can be reasonably sure that the individual will inform us that he is hungry or, contrariwise, when an individual informs us that he is hungry, we can be reasonably sure that he will soon initiate behavior appropriate to obtaining food.

Simple as this relationship may appear, it does provide us with a key to a new understanding of human nature. If the goals toward which an individual's behavior is directed are determined and motivated by conditions within his organism, then a study of these goals should yield valuable information concerning the motivational force. On the other hand, a knowledge of the existence of the motivational force or forces would enable us to predict in advance the kind of goals for which the individual will strive. This is exactly the relationship that lies at the basis of every science. It is known as the *cause-and-effect relationship*. When we understand it, we can predict the effects that will be produced by a given cause under known conditions, and when particular effects are observed, we can attribute them to their respective causes.

This is the type of relationship we expect a science of human conduct to establish. It converts the individual from a plastic and static organism into a reservoir of energies. Man is no longer conceived as a passive, machine-like organism that reacts only to changes in his environment. He is dynamic—an organism ready and prepared to attack his environment with all the facilities at his disposal in order to bring about changes that serve his own inner purposes. Man emerges as the type of being we have long wished him

to be—an individual motivated by orderly forces within himself, not by extranatural forces of a whimsical and unpredictable nature. The solution to the puzzle of human conduct is now definitely placed within man himself.

It is not sufficient, however, to establish a causal relationship between some condition or force within man and his subsequent behavior. That is an important step, but it is not the only one. Our next step must be an investigation of the nature of these forces and an attempt to discover the ways in which they operate when conditions within and without the organism are changed. Understanding of these various factors will enable us to arrange future conditions in such a way that the energy of these motivational forces will flow into channels of behavior that offer the greatest contribution to the individual's development and well-being. In brief, we can gain control over human conduct through a knowledge of his motivational forces and the ways in which they operate.

§ *Hunger is not the real motivator of food-seeking behavior.*

Before proceeding to a consideration of other types of behavior, let us, therefore, examine more closely the nature of the force that determines and motivates food-taking and food-seeking behavior. In our preliminary considerations, we found that the internal condition motivating behavior of this kind is the result of a period of relative starvation during which no food is taken. We usually call this condition *hunger*, and in everyday life we readily attribute food-taking behavior to it. Is this a sound scientific conclusion? Is hunger synonymous with the internal condition that directs and sustains food-seeking behavior? There is every reason to believe that it is not. A great many scientific investigations in the field of experimental psychology and

physiology have shown, rather conclusively, that what we call *hunger* is no more than a conscious sensation or perception arising from internal stimulation. Physiologists have discovered that a period of starvation produces a state of relative depletion in the bodily tissues which, among other things, results in a change in the contents of the blood-stream and produces violent contractions of the stomach muscles. These contractions, in turn, stimulate certain nerve endings which cause the sensation of hunger to arise in consciousness in much the same way as light of a certain wave-length falling on the retina of the eye stimulates nerve endings that cause the perception of red to appear.

When you are driving an automobile down the street and the sensation red, in the form of a traffic light, appears in your consciousness, you bring your car to a stop. Under these circumstances we would not think of regarding this sensation as the motivational force that supplies the energy for all the complicated movements necessary to bring the car to a stop—lifting one foot from the accelerator and placing it on the brake, pushing the other foot down on the clutch pedal, and so on. No more can we regard the sensation of hunger as the motivating force behind the complex forms of behavior we found in connection with food-seeking activities. In both cases the sensation is little more than a source of information concerning the environment. In one case it concerns the external environment and in the other the internal. In both cases the sensations can only be regarded as signals for the release of available energy into behavior appropriate to the situation.

Let us examine our own experience with hunger sensations. Suppose that you are hungry and impatiently waiting for dinner to be served. The telephone rings. You answer it and discover that a friend is calling. Does your hunger interfere with your talking to him? On the contrary, your

hunger seems to vanish. You are no longer aware of these sensations and carry on a long conversation in spite of the fact that the family may be calling you to the table. After you have finished the conversation, the hunger sensations suddenly reappear, and you rush to the dining-room. It would be most illogical to assume that talking to your friend could in any way alleviate the state of depletion in your bodily tissues. It would be equally illogical to suppose that such a state suddenly springs into being again when you hang up the receiver. We must assume, then, that the sensations of hunger are the manifestations of the internal condition created by a lack of food.

We do not know a great deal about the fundamental nature of this internal condition. Physiologists have supplied us with data concerning many changes that take place in bodily organs when food is withheld for a period of time, but they have failed to discover the source of the energy required for sustaining food-seeking activities or how it motivates these particular forms of behavior rather than any others. We might suppose, moreover, that the bodily changes they describe are not the real cause of the observed behavior but are themselves the effects of a condition lying still deeper in the organism.

¶ *We formulate an hypothesis to account for the behavior we can observe.*

It is not essential for us as psychologists to know the exact nature of the internal condition or how it motivates these particular forms of behavior. From a study of its manifestations we can make assumptions concerning its nature and formulate an hypothesis that will make the observed phenomena intelligible to us. Up to the present time we know that after a period of starvation the behavior of both animals and human beings is such that they seek food and try to get

it into the stomach. We also know that when they have succeeded in attaining this goal, behavior of this type ceases. Furthermore, we have reason to suppose that abstinence from food creates a condition within the organism that can supply the energy required for such behavior. We do not know what this condition is or how these effects are produced. For descriptive and explanatory reasons we will, therefore, call this internal condition a *need* and assume that this *need* supplies the energy and directs the behavior of the organism.

This, at first glance, may appear to be an illegitimate and unscientific procedure. "How," you may ask, "can we create a concept of *need* and endow it with dynamic and directive qualities when, in reality, we don't know the real nature of the underlying condition to which it refers?" To this we can only reply that every science progresses by creating hypothetical concepts of this kind and making assumptions concerning their nature. We have grown so accustomed to most of the assumptions made by the objective sciences that we accept them as facts and forget that they are only fictions created for the sole reason of explaining phenomena that would be inexplicable without them. Consider, for example, the flippancy with which we talk about electricity. To the unsophisticated it must seem that we know all there is to be known about it. We use electricity in a hundred different ways and have no reluctance in predicting what it will do under given conditions. But even the most learned physicists do not know its fundamental nature. From a study of phenomena they assume that it exists and has certain characteristics. They know how this particular condition can be created, and they know the effects it will produce. However, "pure" electricity has never been examined. Science can only know it from a study of its effects.

And so it is with every source of energy. In each case our

real knowledge is confined to phenomena. We group the phenomena that appear related under various headings and assume that sources of energy such as heat, light, electricity, and so on exist which cause the phenomena. In every case the source of energy is an hypothetical assumption that makes the causation of a large group of phenomena intelligible to us. This is exactly the kind of reasoning we are using in the study of behavior. We assume the existence of a *need* in order to understand the behavior that we can observe. And in doing so we are no worse off than the physicist or the chemist. We are all following the same procedure.

§ *The need is not unlike a condition of tension.*

It may help our understanding of the nature and action of a *need* if we think of the organism as a system of forces that are in a state of equilibrium or balance with one another. After a satiating meal the system is in a state of equilibrium, at least as far as food is concerned. Under these circumstances there is no tendency for the organism to seek or consume more food. As the food last taken is digested and absorbed by the tissues, a state of relative depletion gradually sets in. This state of depletion disturbs the equilibrium of the system, and a state of internal tension is set up which increases as the state of depletion increases. The greater the tension, the greater the amount of energy available for discharge in behavior. Behavior motivated by a specific form of tension, however, is not haphazard. On the contrary, it is always directed toward specific goals whose attainment will reduce the tension that motivated it and permit the system to return to a state of relative equilibrium.

The concept of *need* corresponds to such a state of tension, and since the tension determines the type of goals toward which the behavior will be directed, we can describe the need in terms of its goals. In the case of food-seeking and

food-taking behavior we could, then, refer to the motivating condition as a *need for food*. By hypothesis the *need for food* would, therefore, be the motivating force behind every form of behavior designed to obtain food and eat it, regardless of whether the behavior consists of tramping over the mountains with a rifle in search of game, sitting by the edge of a brook with a fishing rod in hand, chopping wood in return for a meal, panhandling in the street, or merely raiding the refrigerator.

§ *Further manifestations of need activity.*

Our preliminary considerations concerning the manifestations of the need for food have been almost wholly confined to an outline of the kinds of overt (expressed) behavior which the need motivates, together with a brief summary of the type of goals toward which this behavior is directed. This procedure was necessary because overt behavior is, in a sense, common property. We can directly observe and study these reactions under varying external conditions in other people as well as in ourselves. They are the foundations on which every science of human conduct must be built, and in the case of the need for food, we can investigate them under controlled laboratory conditions using both human beings and animals as experimental subjects. Since we can vary the intensity of the need, to a large extent, by varying the period of abstinence from food, and we can change the external situation in which the subsequent behavior must take place, we have an experimental situation which closely approximates that of the objective sciences.

There are, however, other manifestations of need activity which do not lend themselves to direct observation by others. Overt behavior such as we have described usually takes place after the need has reached the intensity necessary for it to be consciously recognized in the form of "hun-



ger sensations." Often, in the course of everyday living, we are conscious of hunger sensations and yet do not immediately initiate food-seeking or food-taking behavior. It may be that we must finish a certain task, or it is still too early for dinner, or we are not yet hungry enough to make the effort necessary to overcome our inertia at the moment. There may be any number of reasons for postponing behavior that would remedy the unpleasant internal condition. An outside observer, under these circumstances, could not deduce the existence of our need for food. Our overt behavior would tell him nothing because we are not behaving in accordance with the demands of the need. We could do so, but we don't. For descriptive purposes let us call this the *potential* (unexpressed) stage of need activity. The potential stage would consist of the period between the time we became conscious of our hunger sensations and the time we began to do something about them. The active stage, when we are really engaged in behavior designed to alleviate the internal condition, could then be called the *kinetic* stage of need activity.

Manifestations of need activity during the potential stage are, however, open to our personal inspection. Not only do we have sensations of hunger, but we also have trains of thought concerning the taking of food. Images of delectable meals and of places in which they might be obtained pass through our minds. Frequently we can almost see ourselves sitting at the table devouring huge quantities of food. At times these images become so clear that we find our mouths "watering"—the organism has reacted to the image as though it were a reality. And the longer the duration of the potential stage, the more persistent do images and thoughts of this kind become. After a time we find it almost impossible to shut them out and direct our attention to other things. We can regard these thoughts and images as a form

of internal behavior motivated by the need. They prepare the organism for food-taking, and if the circumstances demand it, they provide the feasible alternatives by which food may be obtained. They serve, therefore, a useful purpose in directing the subsequent behavior of the individual into the most profitable and economical channels.

Ordinarily we are not aware of the existence of the need prior to the time we experience hunger sensations. And yet there is every reason to suppose that the need exists and does affect our behavior and thought processes. You may be walking down the street in the middle of the afternoon and be completely unaware of any sensations of hunger or any thoughts of food. During your walk you pass a bakery or a food shop displaying a variety of food objects. They interest you. You stop and examine them. You begin to feel slight sensations of hunger and the thought of eating a morsel or two is very pleasurable. You enter the shop and buy a snack and proceed on your way. We must assume that a relatively weak need was present before you reached the food shop. Its activity was not sufficient, at the time, to force conscious recognition and to dominate your behavior. The sight of tasty food, easily attainable, however, made the entry of the need into consciousness more accessible and succeeded in temporarily changing the goal of your behavior. Had you passed the same shop immediately after a satiating meal, you would not have been interested in the food objects displayed, nor would you have had an inclination to partake of them. It is logical to suppose that the need endowed the food objects with the desirable qualities without your being aware of it.

We also have evidence to show that the need subtly influences our thought processes during this stage which we can call the *latent* or preconscious stage of need activity. A series of experiments conducted by Sanford, a co-worker

of Henry Murray, illustrated this type of influence very clearly. In these experiments a group of people was given a battery of tests at varying intervals after eating. In one test the subjects were asked to respond to each of a series of words presented by the experimenter with the first word that came into their minds. The words presented had no connection with food. The results showed that the longer the time after eating, the larger the number of response words referring to food. In another test they were asked to complete partially drawn pictures. Again it was found that as the time after eating increased, there was an increase in the number of pictures completed to represent food objects. In a third test the subjects were asked to supply complete words of which only the first two letters were given. Again the number of food responses increased as the interval increased. During interviews held at the close of the experiments, the subjects, who were unaware of the purpose of the tests, were asked when they had last eaten and if they had experienced any hunger sensations while the tests were in progress. Almost all of them said they had not felt hunger sensations. Nevertheless, the latent need seems to have influenced their conscious thought processes in such a way that words and images of food were given increasing preference over others.

Then, too, the physiologists have furnished us with data concerning a great many internal changes that take place when the individual abstains from food. We can assume that these changes are also the effects produced by the increasing need, and their purpose may be that of holding the intensity of the need to a minimum by a system of readjustments. It is only after these internal changes reach a certain point that they can stimulate the nerve endings sufficiently to arouse hunger sensations in consciousness which usually result in behavior designed to alleviate the motivating condition.

§ *A summary of the effects produced by the need for food.*

We have devoted considerable time and space to a detailed presentation of the need for food and the various effects it produces. There has not been a great deal of new material in all of this. Most of it is everyday knowledge, only one step removed from common sense. We are all familiar with most of the phenomena described and the various steps in their development. It was for this very reason that we chose this type of behavior as a sample for examination. Since we have all had fundamentally the same experience with it in the past and will have much the same opportunity to check our findings against our own personal experiences of the future, it offers an opening into the secrets of human behavior. It provides material, too, for constructing an adequate hypothesis to account for the causation and modes of operation of behavior. With these as tools we are better equipped to tackle the problem of solving the riddle of more complicated forms of conduct.

Our investigation of the manifestations of the need for food must, therefore, be regarded as a means of perfecting a research instrument. Before we use this instrument in further investigations, it will be well to restate our findings very briefly in order to have them clearly in mind when we approach forms of behavior that are less intelligible to us at the present time.

1. We found that under certain circumstances the behavior of an individual was directed toward the attainment of specific goals. The efforts of the individual continue until one of these goals is achieved and then suddenly cease.

2. Since nothing in the environment could account for this series of phenomena, we formulated an hypothesis according to which these efforts were regarded as effects caused

by some unknown condition within the organism which we called a *need for food*.

3. The concept of need is a fiction endowed with dynamic qualities. Its action is not unlike that of a state of tension in a self-regulatory system of forces that strives to maintain a state of equilibrium. The greater the tension, the more energy is available for discharge through appropriate channels at its disposal.

4. When the state of tension is relatively weak, the individual is not consciously aware of its existence. It does, nevertheless, bring about certain physiological changes and influence thought processes in such a way that images and thoughts of food become more frequent as the tension increases. This preconscious stage we call the *latent* stage of need activity.

5. The need in its latent stage may be transformed into the fully conscious or *potential* stage, when (a) circumstances in the external environment are such that preferred food objects can be procured with very little effort, and (b) when the action of the need has brought about physiological changes sufficiently great to stimulate nerve endings in the internal organs and cause sensations of hunger to arise in consciousness.

6. During the potential stage of need activity the individual has a more or less constant stream of thoughts concerning food objects and ways and means of obtaining them.

7. When the need tension has reached this degree of intensity, it is experienced as unpleasant, and the unpleasantness increases as the need tension increases.

8. The need is translated from the potential stage into the *kinetic* or active stage when it has overcome the inertia of the individual and a feasible method of attack is discovered.

9. During the kinetic stage we can observe the behavior

of the individual directly. The behavior is always a means to an end and not an end in itself. One form of behavior after another may be used until the ultimate goal of the behavior is reached. The sequence in which various forms are used is determined by several factors, such as (a) the opportunities the immediate environment affords, (b) the skills possessed by the individual, (c) his past experiences in similar situations, and (d) his personal preferences. In general, they will follow a rank order of greatest satisfaction with the least expenditure of time and effort.

10. The ultimate goal of all behavior motivated by the need for food is to obtain objects which, when taken into the stomach, can provide nourishment to the depleted tissues and return the organism to a state of relative equilibrium, at which point further efforts to obtain or take food cease. The reduction of the need tension is experienced as pleasant.

11. Although the ultimate goal of the behavior motivated by the need is to obtain nourishment, there are a great many objects in the environment that can be used for this purpose. They serve as the immediate goals of the behavior we observe. The order in which they will be sought by the individual will depend upon (a) their accessibility, (b) their adequacy as learned from previous experience or acquired knowledge, and (c) the preference of the individual. The value of any object to serve as a desirable form of food is determined by the intensity of the existing need.

12. The concept of need, therefore, enables us to bring a number of diverse phenomena into a meaningful relationship with each other. When we have deciphered the significant common element of the goals for which the individual is striving, we can deduce the nature of the underlying need that motivates and directs his behavior. An evaluation of the persistence and the energy expended in

efforts to attain a goal also enables us to estimate the intensity of the need. With these data we are in a position to predict, to some extent, the future course of the individual's thoughts and behavior.

#### § Other physical needs.

Food-seeking and food-taking, however, represent only a small percentage of a given individual's total behavior. Can we employ this same technique and apply the same conclusions to some of the other forms we commonly find in everyday life? It seems that we can. For example, a survey of man's behavior would reveal that a considerable portion of it is directed toward a quite different goal, namely, that of finding and taking water or some other form of liquid refreshment. If we analyzed this type of behavior, we would find exactly the same kind of phenomena we observed in connection with the need for food and would be forced to draw the same conclusions concerning its causation except that in this case we would find it necessary to postulate a *need for moisture* to explain the observed phenomena. Or we could have chosen behavior directed toward goals that had the common characteristic of inactivity in relaxation, rest, or sleep. Again we would have similar phenomena and be forced to postulate an underlying *need for relaxation* in order to account for them. In each case, however, the goals are specific, and the attainment of one goal would have no effect upon the internal conditions that motivated the others. The goals of one need cannot, therefore, be used as substitutes for another need.

We also find that a part of man's behavior is directed toward the goal of evacuating or expelling substances from the body instead of taking them in. The internal conditions that motivate such behavior are intimately related to a surplus of certain substances which exert pressure on the walls

of specific organs. A state of relative equilibrium can be re-established only through the expulsion of these substances. This requires appropriate behavior. A study of such behavior together with the sequence of phenomena preceding it shows a marked similarity to those already described under the need for food. To account for these phenomena we would have to postulate two independent needs—namely, a *need for urination* and a *need for defecation*.

Another group of behavior patterns seems to be intimately related to an internal condition which resembles the foregoing but is not identical with it. These forms of behavior are the ones whose goal is to alleviate desires, physical and emotional, which are constantly created by the secretions of the sexual glands. The various sexual activities are so wide and varied and, owing to cultural patterning, so complex in nature, that a detailed consideration must be postponed to later chapters. On the whole, however, exactly the same characteristics are to be found in these forms of behavior as those discovered in connection with the need for food. We must, consequently, assume the existence of a *need for sex* to explain the occurrence of this type of behavior.

As we observe people in everyday life, we discover that a large part of their behavior has as its goal the removal of the organism from harmful or painful external situations. Conditions of extreme heat or cold, electric shocks, precarious supports, warfare, riots, attacks by dangerous animals or men, are only a few of the many situations of this kind which could be listed. The common characteristic is an element of danger, actual or imaginary, and behavior is instituted which has as its goal the withdrawal of the organism to a place of comparative safety. We must suppose that a *need for safety* motivates behavior of this kind.

It will be noticed that there is a distinct difference be-



tween this need and those previously described. In the former the need tensions developed gradually, either from a state of deficiency in the tissues or from the accumulation of a surplus of substance in specific organs. As these need tensions increase in intensity, they make their existence known to consciousness in order that appropriate behavior will be initiated to remedy the condition. As soon as the behavior attains its goal, the need tension disappears, and further behavior in this direction is unnecessary. The action of these needs is, therefore, rhythmical, and comes and goes with variations in the internal conditions of the organism.

In the case of the need for safety this is not so. This need tension is not associated with the condition of any specific organ although such changes as blood content, heart beat, and pulse rate take place when the need is called into action. These, however, are the effects of the need and serve to prepare the organism for great exertion. They are not the physical basis of the need itself. Furthermore, the need does not seem to be rhythmical in its action. On the contrary, it is always in a state of readiness, and even though the goal of the behavior is reached, the organism responds with similar behavior as soon as a new danger is detected. Should you meet a rattlesnake, for example, while out walking, you withdraw from it as hastily as you can to a place of safety and heave a sigh of relief. If you discover a few moments later that your place of refuge is not as safe as you had supposed, that there is another rattlesnake or other dangerous object in close proximity, you again retreat, and you will continue to do so until you are exhausted. The intensity of the need does not vary greatly with the attainment of an approximate goal. There seems to be a more or less constant supply of energy available for the preservation of the organism although the amount varies from one individual to another and from one time to another. We should also

notice that the stimulus that sets the need in action is in the external environment and not within the individual himself as in the previously described needs, and the response is to draw away from the environment instead of making demands upon it.

These differences should not disturb us. From our approach it makes little difference what conditions set the need in action, whether the ensuing behavior is an assault upon the environment or a withdrawal from it, whether the need is rhythmical or constant in nature, or whether it is intimately related to the specific internal organ or not. The point is that the behavior of the organism requires an expenditure of energy. This energy must come from some source within the individual. We do not know its fundamental nature. We only know the effects it produces. We assume that a dynamic entity, which we have called a *need*, exists and motivates and directs the subsequent behavior of the organism. In some cases we can link the existence of the need with events taking place in certain organs of the body that make the action of the need more intelligible to us. In other cases physiology has not provided us with this kind of information. In either case we can apply our theoretical considerations and conclusions and be justified in doing so if we ultimately arrive at a workable concept of human conduct.

# 4

## SOCIAL NEEDS

THE behavior covered by the physical needs we have described is very similar to the behavior of all animal life. Lower animals share with us certain physical needs. But man's behavior is far more complex and goes beyond the limits set by the action of these needs. Man has his loves, hopes, ambitions, duties, and ideals which do not, as far as we know, have any counterpart in lower animals, and which seem to have little or nothing to do with any known physiological processes. In this realm of behavior we are most ignorant of motivational factors, and yet here understanding is most necessary. It is possible that an application of our earlier findings to this area of behavior may prove profitable. There is nothing invalid or unscientific in such a procedure. Science always moves from the regions about which most is known to those less understood, applying to the latter the same methods, techniques, and suppositions that were found in explaining the former. If the results obtained prove useful, they are utilized until a more comprehensive or adequate theory is developed. Science advances by gradually eliminating the errors in our former thinking just as much as it advances by new and startling discoveries. We must, therefore, always stand ready to relinquish old beliefs and theories when new and more adequate ones are presented.

Let us then apply to other forms of behavior the same line

of thinking we developed in connection with the behavior motivated by the physical needs. Since we know nothing about the internal conditions that motivate such behavior, we must concentrate upon a study of the goals toward which the behavior is directed. If we can find goals possessing a common characteristic, and manifestations in the behavior toward them that are similar to those found in gratifying the physical needs, we will be justified in assuming that some unknown internal condition, or need, is also motivating such behavior. These needs we will refer to as *psychogenic* needs (needs growing out of psychological processes) in order to distinguish them from those which are more intimately related to physiological conditions.

§ *Need for affiliation.*

A study of human behavior reveals that one common goal for which men strive is association with other people. Wherever man is found, he tends to associate with others and form groups. Many writers have attributed this form of behavior to the advantage the individual gains in group participation. Thomas Hobbes, one of the early social theorists, maintained that man had, by nature, impulses to rob, steal, and murder, and that the only manner in which he could obtain any degree of safety or security for himself was to affiliate himself with a group and sacrifice some of his own destructive impulses in order to gain protection from others. Such an interpretation would mean that all affiliative or group behavior is motivated by the need for safety. There seems to be something more than this, however. First offenders, when sent to prison, usually find the loneliness and isolation extremely difficult to bear. Solitary confinement in prison remains one of the most severe punishments society can inflict upon an individual. Yet it is difficult to see how the prisoner's desire for company can arise out of a

fear of danger or how the prisoner could receive any material gains from his association with others. Something more than personal safety must be involved in man's desire for affiliation. It seems to be an end in itself.

So we assume or postulate an underlying *need for affiliation*—a need for human companionship. We all have this need in some degree and show it in our everyday life. A passage from Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome* gives an excellent description of what isolation does to an individual. Ethan Frome says: <sup>1</sup>

"We're kinder side-tracked here now . . . but there was considerable passing before the railroad was carried through to the Flats." He roused the lagging nag with another twitch; then as if the mere sight of the house had let me too deeply into his confidence for any farther pretense of reserve, he went on slowly: "I've always set down the worst of mother's trouble to that. When she got the rheumatism so bad she couldn't move around she used to sit up there and watch the road by the hour; and one year, when they was six months mending the Bettsbridge pike after the floods, and Harmon Gow had to bring his stage round this way, she picked up so that she used to get down to the gate most days to see him. But after the trains begun running nobody ever come by here to speak of, and mother never could get it through her head what had happened, and it preyed on her right along till she died."

We don't have to go to fiction—there are people all around us in whom this need is strong. Look at Paul Lawrence. His greatest enjoyment in life is participation in the activities of various lodges, clubs, and societies. He rarely misses a meeting of any of the many groups he has joined. At the meetings he is very agreeable. He has a ready smile and a kind word for every one. When a stranger appears, Paul goes out of his way to introduce himself and make the

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<sup>1</sup> Edith Wharton, *Ethan Frome* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), pp. 23-24.

newcomer feel at home. He seldom forgets a name or a face and prides himself upon being able to call people by name after an interval of years. He takes part in all sorts of functions, willingly serves on committees, and never complains about the jobs assigned him. He loves to be in large groups of people and to be accepted by them.

Fanny Smith is of a similar nature. In college everybody likes her, and she likes everybody. She is a member of the debating team, sings in the glee club and the chapel choir, is a member of the student council and president of her sorority. Fanny does a lot of entertaining in her room, and if other girls fail to call on her, she goes out and calls on them. She is unhappy when she is alone and prefers to be with a group of strangers in the movies than to sit at home without company. To have people near gives her a feeling of well-being. Any association with others is better than none at all.

We usually describe people like Paul, Fanny, and Ethan Frome's mother as *affiliative*, *sociable*, *genial*, and *friendly*. In them the need for affiliation is strong. The hermit is an example of an individual in whom this need is extremely weak. We also find that there is a great variation in the ways in which people can gratify their need for affiliation. There are people like Fanny or Paul who seem to be able to gratify the need through association with almost any one. With them the need is *diffuse*. Then there are other people who associate a great deal with others but always with the same comparatively small group. Only when such affiliations are denied them, do they turn to others. Their need is *focal*. Applying these terms to the need for food, for example, we would say that the people in whom the need is diffuse will eat almost anything placed before them and enjoy it, whereas those in whom the need is focal are finicky and very choosy about what they eat.

¶ *Need for love.*

Another goal toward which man strives is to love and be loved. Being in love is something different from being united with a group. In a group the bonds tend to be rather lax, and each individual strives to retain his own identity. People who love one another want the bonds to become tighter to submerge their identities in each other. Feelings of ownership develop along with the feeling of being owned by the loved ones. Although there may be a number of different kinds of love attachments at any particular time, there is a strong tendency for these attachments to remain specific and for each to show certain special characteristics. The love for one's mother is different from the love for brother or sister, and all of these are different from the love for one's sweetheart. Each relationship binds the individual closely to another in a special way. Each contributes to one's feeling of worth and value and gives him support.

All behavior having relationships of this kind as a goal may be attributed to a *need for love*. It appears to be one of the most powerful factors in personality. Without gratification of this need, life becomes empty and valueless. The unloved individual may become listless and despondent as in the case of Marcia Stone. At the age of thirty-five she had attempted suicide several times. She had never been in love. She had always felt herself cut off from love because she thought she was unusually homely and that nobody could ever care for her. This attitude was carried over to her family. She felt that she was the ugly duckling and that even her parents could not love her. What appeared to be love from them she interpreted as pity, and she rejected it wholeheartedly. She even hated to look in the mirror because the image in the mirror impressed upon her how homely she thought she was.

As a result of this attitude, which she held over a period of a great many years, Marcia withdrew from all social contacts. She didn't join any social activities and had no friends of either sex. Whenever people made friendly advances to her, she felt that they were pitying her, and consequently she drew further into her shell. Feeling herself unloved, she went through life despising herself. She tried to work, but always the question arose: "Work for whom? Work for what?" Nobody wanted her—nobody needed her—nobody cared what became of her. She might just as well be dead and out of the way. But she did not want to die. She felt that somewhere there must be somebody who could love her and whom she could love in return. What she wanted more than anything else in life was to have somebody who accepted her as she was, somebody who cared for her, somebody who needed her, somebody she could be close to. Her fondest phantasy was to have a home of her own with a large open fireplace. She often dreamed of herself sitting there in the evening—happy with another person.

The truth is that Marcia was not nearly as homely as she believed herself to be. As a child she compared herself with her mother who was noted for her good looks. She suffered by comparison, and since there was so much talk about beauty in the home, she fallaciously concluded that these were the only qualities upon which love could be founded. The result was that she believed she was not loved and never could be loved because she was not pretty. She covered up and ignored the admirable qualities that would have brought her what she sought and misinterpreted the intentions of those who were attracted by them. Her need for love was, therefore, ungratified although she spent her life searching for love and not knowing it when she found it.

One day Marcia met a man who was so persistent in his pursuit of her that she could no longer doubt the sincerity



of his motives. It seemed almost too good to be true. The feeling of emptiness which had haunted her for years disappeared. Even her external appearance changed, and she became radiant. People were attracted to her, and everybody seemed to have a pleasant word to say. Work ran through her fingers with no apparent effort, and she felt free and happy. Thoughts of worthlessness and suicide disappeared. With the gratification of her need for love she became a new person.

§ *Need for nurturance.*

Another group of actions have as their goal the sheltering, comforting, protecting, and assisting of persons who are weak or in need of help. The classic example of such behavior is found in parents and has usually been attributed to a parental instinct. However, a great deal of the same behavior is found in the work of doctors and nurses, as well as ministers and teachers, and all who make an effort to help those who are less fortunate, less capable, or less comfortable than themselves. All such behavior, we may say, arises from a *need for nurturance*.

Many of our altruistic acts grow out of this need. This often means sacrificing one's own welfare for that of another. Nurturant behavior is clearly illustrated in Balzac's story of "Father Goriot" in which the father says:

I felt so humbled yesterday when I had not the twelve thousand francs [to pay for his daughter's gown for the ball], that I would have given the rest of my miserable life to wipe out that wrong. You see, I could have borne anything once, but latterly this want of money has broken my heart. Oh! I did not do it by halves; I titivated myself up a bit, and went out and sold my spoons and forks and buckles for six hundred francs; then I went to old Daddy Gobseck, and sold a year's interest in my annuity for four hundred francs down. Pshaw! I can live on dry bread, as I did when I was young; if I have done it before, I can

do it again. My Nasie shall have one happy evening, at any rate. She shall be smart. The bank note for a thousand francs is here under my pillow; it warms me to have it lying there under my head, for it is going to make my poor Nasie happy. . . . Fathers must always be giving if they would be happy themselves; always giving—they would not be fathers else.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that this need is only found in older people. It is frequently found in childhood and tends to increase toward adolescence and often becomes redirected so that the child may, in the end, nurture his own parents. Charles Lamb gives us an example of such redirection in the "Essay of Elia."

He was observed, after dinner, carefully to gather up the remnants left at his table . . . and, in an especial manner, these disreputable morsels, which he would convey away, and secretly stow in the kettle that stood at his bedside. None saw when he ate them. . . . Some reported, that, on leave-days, he had been seen to carry out of the bounds a large blue check handkerchief, full of something. This then must be the accursed thing. . . . He was excommunicated; put out of the pale of the school. . . . Still he persevered. At length he was observed by two of his school fellows, who were determined to get at the secret, and had traced him . . . to enter a large worn out building. . . . After him they silently slunk in . . . saw him tap at a poor wicket, which was opened by an aged woman meanly clad. . . . Accusation was formally preferred [selling scraps to beggars]. The result was, that the supposed mendicants . . . turned out to be the parents of —, an honest couple come to decay, whom this seasonable supply had . . . saved from mendicancy; and that this young stork, at the expense of his own good name, had all this while been only feeding the old birds!

Not all behavior arising from the need for nurturance is directed toward human beings. Many people find gratification for this need in caring for animals rather than for their fellow-men. Instead of looking after the orphans, the poor,

the sick, the aged, or the infirm, they prefer to lavish their pity, sympathy, and benevolence on pets.

Frequently one finds a strong tendency in nurturant persons to regard all those with whom they come in contact as weak in order that their help may be justified. Arthur Smith is such an individual. His wife does not seem to be an invalid, and yet Arthur is very much concerned about her welfare. Each noon before he eats his own lunch, he calls his wife on the telephone and makes sure that she is well and inquires about her luncheon. His wife then reads back to him her luncheon menu, and Arthur often makes suggestions concerning the advisability of eating this food or that, balancing her diet, and calculating the number of calories the luncheon contains in comparison with the number required to keep her in good health. If the day is pleasant, he encourages her to go outdoors and walk, and usually suggests a route which he feels will be enjoyable for her and yet not overtax her. If the day is cool or damp, he warns her that it is not the proper type of weather for her to be outdoors and insists on a promise that she will remain at home during the afternoon and permit him to do the shopping on his return from work.

Nor is his solicitude confined to his family. In his office he takes a very paternal attitude toward his office boy and stenographer. He is always ready and anxious to listen to their troubles and to offer his advice and assistance. If either one of them is sick for a day, he visits or sends delicacies, flowers, or books. Even on the street he is solicitous about the welfare of the beggars and peddlers and has never been known to pass by a mendicant without making some sort of donation. As far as can be determined, Arthur has never been unpleasant, harsh, or unsympathetic. His great concern in life seems to be to look after the other fellow's needs, regardless of time, effort, or expense.

This need for nurturance is considered a very desirable trait in our culture. Children are taught from an early age that it is right and good to help those who are in need—to be generous, considerate, and sympathetic. In the Bible we find many quotations that stress the righteousness of such behavior. We are told that “It is more blessed to give than to receive”; that “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”; and we are advised to “Love thy neighbor as thyself.” Such training undoubtedly serves to place a premium on expressions of this need. But to the individual in whom the need is strong, such expressions are no hardship. In fact, he derives a great deal of pleasure from them and is unhappy if the opportunity to help others is denied. Many a parent, for example, finds so much pleasure in making sacrifices for his children that he does the children a great injustice. When the children are not only able but eager to assume their places in the world as mature individuals, the parent may refuse to recognize their capacities and desires. Instead, the children are forced to remain in helpless and childlike rôles in order that the parent’s own need for nurturance be gratified. Many problems during the adolescent period arise, in part at least, from such an attitude on the part of parents. Some of these problems will concern us later on in our study.

These three psychogenic needs have been grouped together under the heading of *social needs* because the goal object or situation which the behavior is designed to attain is primarily a human relationship. It is only when the human relationship is impossible, for one reason or another, that the behavior becomes directed toward substitute goals in the form of animals, plants, or other object relationships. Through the influence of the needs for affiliation, love, and nurturance other human beings acquire value in the eyes of the individual. People are, in fact, indispensable to him

if these needs, which lie at the very foundation of group life, are to be gratified in a satisfying manner. It is difficult indeed to imagine a society in which the individual members do not possess these needs in some degree. All true human relationships, as well as social activities, are an expression of one or more of them.

It may be helpful to pause for a few moments and observe the action of these needs. We can see rather clearly the substitution of one goal object for another when external circumstances prevent the attainment of the one preferred. For example, the preferred object of a nurturant person is probably a child of his own, but lacking this he finds substitutes in his wife, employees, orphans, or people who are sick, poor, or needy. If inner or outer circumstances prevent him from expressing the need toward human beings, he expresses it toward other substitute objects such as household pets or even plants. The common characteristic of all the goals, however, is to help, protect, and nurture. Thus, the ways and means through which a social need is expressed may differ, but the ultimate goal remains the same. Usually we are not fully conscious of the existence of these needs as such, and yet, when the external environment is favorable to their gratification, the behavior appropriate to their gratification seems highly desirable and pleasant. There are times, however, when the need is strong enough (during the potential stage of need activity) to force representative images, memories, thoughts, and wishes into consciousness and initiate behavior that will lead to its gratification. Under these circumstances we find the same persistency of efforts we noted in the case of the physical needs.

The fundamental nature of the social needs is similar to that of the need for safety. They always seem to be in a state of readiness; they are not rhythmical in their action; and their gratification is always relative rather than absolute.

The strongly affiliative person, for example, seldom affiliates so much with others that he does not want to associate with people any more. These needs also resemble the need for safety insofar as their intensity varies widely from one individual to another, but is fairly constant in a given individual. The affiliative person under ordinary circumstances remains affiliative, and the nurturant person continues to be nurturant, and so on. It seems that we are beginning to find some of the bases for a large part of human behavior.

# 5

## EGOISTIC NEEDS

BEHAVIOR motivated by social needs does not cover all the areas of human activity. A large part of human behavior is directed toward goals in which other human beings do not play such an important rôle. Instead of being valued objects for the gratifications that they give us, human beings often serve only as a means to the attainment of other goals. They become little more than stepping-stones for an individual's self-aggrandizement. For descriptive purposes we may refer to such behavior as *egoistic*.

### ¶ *Need for dominance.*

One of the most conspicuous and common forms of egoistic behavior is found in the attempts of one individual to set himself in a position of authority from which he can control, influence, or lead others. Some persons seek to dominate in physical activities; others in the moral, social, intellectual, political, or spiritual spheres. We need not discuss the many ways and means by which individuals strive to gain this goal. The thing that interests us at the moment is that there seems to be something within people which makes them strive to attain power or authority over fellow human beings. We can assume that the motivation for all such behavior is a *need for dominance*. Those in whom the need is strong we commonly refer to as *masterful, authoritative,*

*executive*, and *forceful*. In its most elementary form the need for dominance is manifested on a purely physical basis. In a group of young children playing in the street we often find that the leader is the largest and the strongest among them. Many primitive societies choose their leaders on a similar basis.

In our complex society, however, other qualifications for dominant leadership are necessary. Physical competency or superiority is of minor importance. In general, the possibilities of winning a position of leadership are greatly enhanced if the individual has excelled in some line of endeavor which the group prizes. In schools we tend to elevate to leadership those individuals who have achieved success either in sports or academic pursuits or who have "winning personalities." In our organizations, fraternities, and societies we elect those who have previously proved their mettle.

In larger spheres, however, this does not always follow. Hitler, for example, is leader of millions of people although he did not excel in anything in his earlier life. On the contrary, prior to his rise to power Hitler seems to have represented everything which the Germans, as a nation, have long despised. He was the typical ne'er-do-well, incompetent, ill-humored, and unsocial. It is true that he put forth a plan or philosophy that claimed much for the future of Germany, but undoubtedly his idea was only one among hundreds. Why Hitler became the leader of Germany is a mystery difficult to unravel. One thing is certain, however, and that is that he had an inordinately strong need for dominance, and in order to gratify this need he was willing to sacrifice everything else. In his book, *Mein Kampf*, he gives an excellent portrait of the dominant individual's conception of leadership.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1940).



[It is the leader's] obligation to assume entire responsibility for all he does and causes to be done. This includes no majority vote on individual questions, but simply the decision of one man who backs it with his life and all that he has. For anyone who objects that, such being the requirements, it would hardly be possible to find anyone ready to devote his person to tasks so risky, there can be but one answer: "God be thanked, the whole point of the Germanic Democracy is that any stray unworthy climber and moral shirker cannot come in by the back stairs and govern his fellow countrymen, but that incompetents and weaklings will be scared by the immensity of the responsibility to be assumed."

This is an extreme form of the need for dominance. Egoism almost leaps out of the quotation. History has shown us what individuals with strong needs for dominance are willing to do in order to obtain power. They are the exceptions and not the rule, but they do serve as illustrations of a tendency that is present in many others in a milder form. In most people, of course, the need does not reach such a degree of intensity.

#### § *Need for autonomy.*

The control of a group is usually not accomplished, however, without some resistance on the part of the individual members. There seems, in fact, to be a fundamental striving against outer controls. J. B. Watson, in working with newly-born infants, found that one of the three primary forms of reaction was resistance to restraint. If one holds the arms of a newly-born child, he wiggles around in various ways and seeks to free himself. The energies of the infant are mustered and brought into service to throw off the restraining agent. As the struggle goes on, a typical rage reaction, accompanied by crying and screaming, can be observed.

As we grow older, the restraints placed upon us are apt

to be more psychological than physical. Instead of being physically restricted, adults are limited by laws, customs, traditions, obligations, and duties. But even here we find a strong tendency, varying greatly with different people, to defy or free themselves of any form of restraint or coercion and to assert themselves as independent individuals. Behavior of this kind, we may suppose, is motivated by a *need for autonomy*.

Expressions of the need for autonomy may be observed among a great many automobile drivers who refuse to abide by speed laws or who insist upon parking in restricted or prohibited areas. To many people the sign, "Please keep off," is merely an invitation to indulge in the prohibited behavior. In all phases of life we find people who refuse to abide by the rules and regulations of the group or the commands of other people. Those in whom the *need for autonomy* is strong we usually refer to as *independent, rebellious, irresponsible, free, resistant, or uncoöperative*.

Mary Antin, in *The Promised Land*, describes such a person. She writes: <sup>1</sup>

It is true that he had left home in search of bread for his hungry family, but he went blessing the necessity that drove him to America. The boasted freedom of the New World meant to him far more than the right to reside, travel, and work wherever he pleased; it meant the freedom to speak his thoughts, to throw off the shackles of superstition, to test his own fate, unhindered by political or religious tyranny. He was only a young man when he landed—thirty-two; and most of his life he had been held in leading-strings. He was hungry for his untasted manhood.

The sentiments of an individual in whom the need for autonomy is striking may be expressed in the words of Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty or give me death."

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Antin, *The Promised Land* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1912), p. 202.

§ *Need for achievement.*

To excel or achieve in a particular field of activity is also a common goal of human endeavor. A person may strive to be the strongest man in his school, the best swimmer, the best boxer, wrestler, runner, skater, football player, tennis player, dancer, or what not, quite apart from the possibilities which his achievement might offer for control over other people. In fact, we frequently find that when a man is at the "top of the pile," he may still seek to improve his performance. Let us suppose that a man is the champion sprinter of the world—that he can run a hundred yards in 9.4 seconds. Does he rest content with this performance? Usually not. Having no other person with whom to compete, he competes with himself and attempts to set a new world's record of 9.2 seconds. In order to attain this goal he may work hard, keep to a rigid schedule of rest and diet, and thus deny satisfaction to many of his other needs. He may fail in achieving this goal because it lies beyond his physiological limit, the point at which the necessary physical strength and muscular coördination are no longer available. Nevertheless, the desire and motivation are present, and we can assume they originate from a *need for achievement*.

We find the same type of striving in intellectual pursuits. Individuals work to stand at the head of their class academically or to attain the highest ranking in the school. Here their success will depend upon their intellectual capacities and the strength of the motivating need. The same thing holds true for the scientist who spends countless hours in his laboratory struggling to overcome obstacles that lie in the path of a new discovery. Other people strive for moral perfection and attempt to overcome tendencies in themselves which they consider immoral or unsocial. Still others set social goals. They try, to the best of their abilities, to

“crash” social circles or castes. These are the social climbers. Every field of activity holds possibilities for the expression of the need for achievement. The goals that happen to be chosen depend, in large part, on the operation of other needs, the environment, and the native endowment of the individual.

§ *Need for acquisition.*

A common characteristic to be found in many of the goals for which human beings strive is the tendency to acquire objects. Some strive to acquire land, whereas others seek clothes, gold, ideas, rugs, stamps, coins, automobiles, and so forth. Money is probably the most common of these objects in our own culture. Here, again, we can see clearly that although the methods of acquisition may differ widely, the goal remains the same. For, example, the prospector makes money by working with his hands in order to obtain gold from the ground; the business man makes money by bartering; the thief by snatching purses from people in the street; the gambler through bets and speculations; the criminal through robbery and plundering; and most of us by performing some sort of useful work. All behavior that has the goal of acquiring more objects can be attributed to an underlying *need for acquisition*.

In a culture built on economic foundations, such as ours, it is natural that behavior motivated by this need would play a very important rôle in everyday life. The result is that many of us have reached the point where we tend to measure a man's success by his ability to acquire money and other tangible objects. Many believe that it is the main road to happiness and will agree with Ben Jonson when he writes:

Get money; still get money, boy,  
No matter by what means.

Persons in whom the need for acquiring is strong we usually describe as *greedy*, *acquisitive*, *avaricious*, *covetous*, *grasping*, or *demanding*. Mark Twain, in addition to his more desirable qualities, had a strong need of this kind. Masson, in writing of him, says: "He tried to play the businessman in place of being a great artist. The reason was, primarily, that he became more or less intoxicated with money." Gamaliel Bradford also says of him: <sup>1</sup> "He always wanted money, although rivers of it ran into him and ran out again. He spent it, he gave it away, he never had it, he always wanted it."

#### § *Need for retention.*

The need for acquisition is gratified only by obtaining objects which the individual does not at present possess. No great value is attached to those which have already been acquired as we see in the case of Mark Twain. Many people, however, are more concerned with guarding their present possessions than they are in acquiring additional ones. Although in practice the acquisition and guarding of possessions are often found together, they may operate independently of one another. We must, consequently, assume a *need for retention*, to account for stingy, miserly, economical, parsimonious, frugal, thrifty, and saving behavior—behavior which George Eliot has so beautifully illustrated in her character, Silas Marner, of whom she writes: "His life had reduced itself to the mere functions of weaving and hoarding, without any contemplation of an end towards which the functions tended." Here the emphasis is to hold on to what you have in your possession rather than to get more.

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<sup>1</sup> Gamaliel Bradford, *American Portraits* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922), p. 9.

### § *Need for cognizance.*

We must also assume a *need for cognizance* (knowing) in order to explain man's inquisitive, inquiring, and exploratory behavior. Such a need would lie at the very roots of modern science which persistently tries to penetrate deeper into the realm of the unknown. In order to help gratify this need more adequately, man has developed such instruments as the telescope and the microscope which open new worlds to him. Under the same heading we would include explorers and those individuals who investigate new fields of study out of curiosity. Whenever we seek to find out "why" or "how" or "what," we are expressing a need for cognizance.

### § *Need for attention.*

A large part of the behavior of many people has the goal of attracting attention to themselves. These are the show-offs—conspicuous, spectacular, or dramatic individuals who utilize a variety of means to gain the attention and applause of others. Many men strive to draw attention to themselves by wearing unusual clothes—flashy patterns, loud ties and socks. Many women seek to attain the same end by wearing extremes in style; using much lipstick, rouge, and cosmetics; wearing extravagant jewelry; and the like. We may suppose that all such behavior is motivated by a *need for attention*.

### § *Need for destruction.*

Then, too, there are many behavior patterns that have destruction as their goal. People destroy other people, their reputations and their property, in big and little ways, as well as other objects. Psychologists have tried for years to explain this tendency. To mention a few, McDougall attributes such behavior to an instinct of combativeness, Trotter to an instinct of pugnacity, Bovet to a fighting

instinct, Freud to an instinct of aggression. In using the term *instinct* all these psychologists implied that the tendency to destroy is innate—a part of man's fundamental nature. To account for such behavior, we must assume a *need for destruction*.

Destruction in this sense includes every action that tends in any way to belittle, degrade, attack, injure, or destroy other objects or people. For example, children may express the need in intentionally destroying their toys, pulling the cat's tail, teasing their playmates, picking fights, throwing and breaking things in general. Danny O'Toole was a boy in whom this need was exceptionally strong. When Danny was four years old, his mother was unable to control him at home and he was sent to a nursery school. Within a week after his admission he was regarded by the entire school as a young terror. His greatest delight was to disrupt the class by pinching or pulling the hair of the little girl who sat next to him in order to make her scream. When he was isolated from the group, in a corner, he enjoyed himself by throwing blocks, crayons, paper clips, or anything else he could lay his hands on, at the other children or at the teacher. When the teacher talked to him and tried to enlist his coöperation, he kicked her and called her names. Most of us, in our school careers, have at some time or other seen or heard of children who showed behavior of this type.

In general, we find aggressive or destructive behavior in many modified forms. We all know people who enjoy a good fight or an argument and feel happy when they overcome their adversaries. We all know people who indulge in malicious gossip about their neighbors in the secret hope that the good reputation of another may be injured or destroyed. Then, there are the people who are overcritical of the efforts of others to do something constructive; they seem

to get pleasure out of pointing to faults and belittling the accomplishment. There are the vandals, criminals, and traitors who endeavor to break down the social order. There are others who try to hurt or destroy people socially by adopting a scornful attitude or making sarcastic remarks. Even wit may be employed in this way. Charles Lamb in his essay "The South Sea House" writes: "Can I forget thee, Henry Man, the wit, the polished man of letters, the author of the South Sea House? Who never entered at thy office in a morning or quitted it in midday . . . without some quirk that left a sting!"

In assuming a need for destruction we are not saying that a tendency to destroy is inborn. We are saying: Behavior that has as its goal the injury or destruction of other objects or people is easily observable in everyday life. Under many circumstances nothing in the environment warrants such behavior or accounts for the quantity of energy expended in carrying it out. There seems to be some condition within the organism that finds gratification in the attainment of such goals. We do not know what this condition is or how it happens to be there. All we know is that the individual acts *as though* such a condition exists. In order to account for his behavior in terms of other behavior which is better understood, we will suppose that the condition does exist and call it a *need for destruction*. Later on we will have occasion to consider its origins in greater detail.

§ *We all express the egoistic needs in our actions.*

It should be emphasized that the egoistic needs are present in all of us in varying degrees of intensity. The dictator is not the only one with a need for dominance, nor is the miser unique in his need for retention. And the need for destruction can be observed in others than fighters, vandals, and scandal mongers. In fact each and every one of these needs



can be observed in some degree in each and every one of us. Consider a high-school boy. His needs for achievement and attention are satisfied by his success in his many activities, curricular and extracurricular; his need for dominance is expressed in the leadership he may assume as a class officer or team captain; his needs for acquisition and retention and cognizance are shown in his hobby—a nature collection; his need for destruction may even be gratified by his smashing tennis game; and so on. Thus can we observe the egoistic needs in the people we know, and their gratification in our culture.

The action of the egoistic needs is identical with that of the social needs. These psychogenic needs, like the need for safety, lack the rhythmical nature characteristic of the physical needs. Their gratification, therefore, is never complete but always relative. The individual with a strong need for dominance never gets quite as much power over others as he wants, and he therefore continues to strive for more; the ambitious person never is completely satisfied with the goal he achieves but must always set himself a higher one; the acquisitive individual never acquires enough, and so on. Even after a very considerable gratification there often is energy available for more behavior of the same kind. Sometimes, a partial gratification acts as an incentive for further efforts in the same direction.

These are only some of the psychogenic needs which can be identified. At the present time, however, our purpose is not to attempt an exhaustive study of possible needs but to consider a few of the more important ones and show, through a study of their operation, how a dynamic conception leads to a better understanding of personality structure and behavior. We will, therefore, stop our analysis at this point and turn our attention to the operation of these needs in everyday life.

# 6

## THE EXPRESSION OF NEEDS

### § *The fusion of needs.*

FROM our description of the needs, it would seem that if we knew the various needs and their respective intensities in a given individual, we could present a fairly accurate picture of his personality. To a certain extent this is true. The psychogenic needs are fairly constant in their intensities, and they do determine, to a large degree at least, our personality traits and attributes. Even in everyday life we describe other persons in terms of their common forms of behavior by applying such adjectives as *malicious*, *inquiring*, *niggardly*, *acquisitive*, *gregarious*, or *domineering*. The difficulty lies in evaluating an individual's needs and their relative intensities. Only an analysis of the goals toward which his behavior is directed could reveal the nature of his motivating needs. Having discovered these, we then estimate their relative strengths by noting the frequency of their appearance in the individual and the intensity of his efforts to attain the goals associated with the needs.

Such an analysis would be comparatively easy if the psychogenic needs operated in a manner identical to that of the physical or physiogenic needs. The behavior arising from the latter is almost always precise and easily distinguishable. When we need food, we initiate food-seeking behavior, and when we have found food, we eat; when we need water, we

find it and drink; when we need relaxation, we find an appropriate place and rest; when we need to eliminate waste products, we find a toilet, and so on. Only very rarely does one course of behavior serve to gratify more than a single need. In the domain of the physical needs, consequently, we experience little difficulty in identifying the underlying needs and evaluating their relative intensities in any individual at a given time.

With the psychogenic needs various composite gratifications of more than one need are the rule, and behavior motivated by a single need is the exception. If an individual has a strong need for destruction, for example, or a strong need for acquisition, he may express each of these needs in several different ways as we have seen. Suppose, now, that both the need for destruction and the need for acquisition are strong in one man. Will it be necessary for him to satisfy one before he can begin to behave in a way that leads to the gratification of the other? Hardly. He may combine the expression of both needs in a single pattern of behavior.

Suppose that the same man has, in addition, a strong need for attention. Is it possible for him to combine the expression of the three needs into a single course of action that will lead to the gratification of all three needs? Quite easily. Prize-fighting behavior, for example, would meet these requirements. His behavior would afford him an opportunity to injure his opponent and thereby gratify his need for destruction; he would occupy the center of the stage and receive the plaudits of the crowd and thereby gratify his need for attention; and he would receive money for his performance, which would satisfy his need for acquisition.

Consider the possibilities of gratifying many needs simultaneously in a profession such as teaching. The teacher may gratify his need for dominance through his influence and control over his students; he may gratify his need for nurtur-

ance by helping those younger and less competent than himself; he may gratify his need for acquisition through the salary paid for his services; he may gratify his need for achievement by reaching a high standard of teaching; he may gratify his need for affiliation by associating with the pupils and with their parents; he may gratify his need for destruction by being a severe critic and disciplinarian; he may satisfy his need for cognizance by further studies in his special field of knowledge, and so on. Indirectly, his activities also serve to gratify his physical needs, insofar as his salary enables him to buy food, shelter, and the like.

The possibilities of combining many needs into a single field of activity are almost without limit. Combinations of this kind are a means of economizing on the expenditure of energy. When two or more needs share in the determination of a single line of action, we speak of a *fusion of needs*. Fusion of different needs in various combinations and intensities furnishes us with the endless variety of behavior patterns we can observe in different people. It is this fusing of a number of different needs into a single course of behavior that complicates the problem of identifying the different needs and evaluating their intensities in a given individual.

### § *How are our interests determined?*

Our *interests* are determined, for the most part, by a fusion of several needs. Activities that can offer satisfaction to many different needs at the same time will absorb our interests. Insofar as the activity associated with an interest performs this function, we find it easy and enjoyable. When it fails to meet these requirements, we lack enthusiasm and find the activity "hard work." If you have strong needs for cognizance, achievement, and autonomy, you may be enthusiastic about working in a scientific laboratory, whereas if

these needs are weak, you may find experiments and research in science very uninteresting and difficult. And so with other fields of study. One person likes one kind of work; another dislikes it and prefers something quite different. Neither one is able to understand the other's likes or to explain his own in acceptable terms. Each of them is being influenced by his own needs and the possibilities of gratifying them through a particular type of activity.

If we are free to choose for ourselves, our choice of work and our future careers will be determined by such fusions of needs. Naturally we do not sit down and list our own needs and then choose the work that is going to gratify them. Our choices will depend primarily on past experience and the gratifications that we have obtained from similar activities. If our choices are correct, we enjoy the work and do it well, but if we are forced into jobs that do not lend themselves to such fusions and leave some of our dominant needs ungratified, we are unhappy and discontented.

Besides these interests which persist and dominate our lives, there are some that are transitory. These we may experience when reading good books, taking part in sports, viewing a play, or some other temporary activity. In these cases the momentary external situation may afford greater opportunities for the expression of some of our needs than our usual environment does. As a result, the gratification of these needs temporarily takes precedence over the more enduring fusions of needs. Our interests at any moment are, therefore, determined by the number of these needs and the possibilities of their gratification in the present environment. When a number of strong needs can be fused, and the environment is favorable, we lose ourselves completely in the resulting activity, but if the fusion of needs is weak and the possibilities of gratification slight, we are rather indifferent to what we are doing.

### ¶ *What is happiness?*

At this point a few words may be said about that elusive thing called *happiness*. It is not easy to analyze happiness, for even when we are happy, we have difficulty in saying why we feel as we do. In general, however, it seems that happiness is intimately related to the expression and gratification of dominant needs. The existence of a need tension is consciously experienced as unpleasant, whereas reduction in the intensity of the need or the gratification of that need is experienced as pleasant. This is most clearly illustrated by the physical needs. The sensation of hunger, for instance, is unpleasant, and the degree of unpleasantness varies with the intensity of the need for food. The taking of food, when the need tension exists, is experienced as pleasant, and the amount of pleasure will, in general, be greater when the need is strong. The same holds true of the psychogenic needs. If we have a strong need for dominance, for example, we are unhappy if we are placed in a subordinate position. Happiness may result from the gratification of a large fusion of needs over a considerable period of time, or at least the recognition of the prospects of such gratification in the near future. Certain it is that the individual engaged in a type of work that offers gratification to his dominant needs is, all other things being equal, the happiest.

### ¶ *What needs do we attend to?*

In our analysis of the need for food, we found that as the need tension increases, it exerts a greater influence upon thought processes. Images of food and of places in which food may be found force their way into consciousness. They represent ways and means by which the need can be gratified. These we discovered in our previous experience. At

the same time we are conscious of all sorts of perceptions of things in the external world.

Not all the perceptions and images present in consciousness at a given moment are of equal clarity. There is always one region of consciousness, the focus of attention, in which the images are clearest. Sometimes this is an image arising from within, sometimes a perception coming from the outside. What determines the fluctuations of the focus of attention? From what we know about the action of needs, it is logical to suppose that the focus of attention is dominated by the strongest need or fusion of needs operating at a given time. Common experience supports this supposition. When we are very hungry, for example, any object which has food possibilities attracts our attention. We *perceive* these food possibilities; we interpret what we see in the light of our need tension. If there are several possibilities, we examine one after the other and evaluate their respective qualities in terms of our past experience and knowledge. Thoughts concerned with obtaining food have, at such a time, first place in the field of consciousness, and perceptions relating to food objects occupy the focus of attention.

The psychogenic needs also operate in this manner. When we have a strong need for acquisition, our attention is directed to those situations in which there is a possibility of acquiring something; when the need for affiliation is strong, our attention is directed to opportunities of making new friends or associating with people, and so on. Suppose several men—an artist, a pawnbroker, a miner, a merchant, a prospective bridegroom, and a thief—look at a large and beautiful diamond. What characteristics of the diamond will hold the attention of each of these individuals? The artist will concentrate on the beauty, clarity, and shape of the stone; the pawnbroker will think of its loan value; the

miner will remember diamond hunts in the past and will visualize it in its rough state; the merchant will consider its quality in terms of its sale value; the prospective bridegroom will see it as a symbol of his love and visualize it upon the finger of his beloved; the thief will consider the possibilities of stealing it. Every one in this group is looking at the same object, but each one sees the object in terms of his own needs.

The focus of attention is not unlike a search-light which plays over the environment looking for opportunities to highlight the dominant need of the moment. If several needs are of approximately the same strength and cannot be fused, attention fluctuates rapidly, especially when the external environment holds possibilities for different kinds of gratification. At times, a need of which you are entirely unaware may be revealed by the unexpected shift of attention that comes when you happen upon an object in the environment that will satisfy it. You may then temporarily postpone the action of the first need and gratify the new one. The clearest example of this is when you are working hard at something you are eager to complete and "forget" you are hungry. If some one brings you a plate of delicious hot food, you immediately say, "I didn't know I was so hungry." Your attention is shifted to the food and you enjoy it just as you enjoyed the work you were doing. And so it seems that the position a need occupies in consciousness depends upon two independent factors—first, the strength of the need itself, and second, the opportunities the environment may offer for its gratification.

Under certain circumstances, even the images that represent a longed-for goal may be accompanied by sensations of pleasure. This is especially true when the need is strong, and there is a definite hope of gratifying it in the



immediate future. To return to our example of food, if this need is strong and you are sure of an appetizing meal at a particular time, the images of this anticipated meal may be experienced as pleasant. Your mouth begins to water at the thought of the juicy steak you are going to eat or expect to eat. You can almost taste it. The image, in such a case, takes over the rôle of reality to a small degree. The images of eating the steak are never as pleasant, however, as the eating of the steak itself.

This is also true in connection with images arising from the psychogenic needs. If the need is strong and the immediate environment affords no gratification, we often imagine ourselves to be in an environment in which the need is being gratified and derive pleasure from the day-dream or phantasy. Solitude and leisure are usually fertile occasions for phantasies of this kind. At such times the immediate environment may offer little in the way of real gratification. Under these circumstances, strong needs find an easy entrance into consciousness, and we imagine ourselves in a gratifying situation and derive pleasure from the anticipation. In extreme cases, these phantasies yield so much pleasure that they become real to the individual, and he reacts to them as if they were actually true. For example, it is not uncommon in the early years of childhood for an only child in an isolated neighborhood to phantasy about having playmates. If the need is strong and there are no children near, or the children available are not good playmates, the phantasied playmates become so real that the child acts as if they really existed. The child may carry on intricate forms of play with them. Lengthy conversations take place. The playmate must be looked after and considered in all activities. An observer can scarcely believe that the phantasied playmate does not really exist.

### § *Need for retaliation.*

Sometimes a person or object in the environment may prevent the gratification of a need. Let us go back to the camping trip. You are very hungry when you arrive in camp and discover that some animal has stolen all your food. A gratification of your need for food is thereby prevented. What happens? You will probably be thoroughly annoyed and disgruntled. As the fruitless search for food continues, this annoyance increases and directs itself more and more toward the animal who stole your food. Abusive thoughts force their way into your mind; then visions of what you would do to that animal if you could only lay your hands on him. These visions have nothing to do with the food value of this particular animal. The phantasies are concerned with behavior whose goal is to destroy the animal in retaliation for the gratification he has prevented you from having. These phantasies may become so impelling that you temporarily "forget" your hunger and hunt the animal in order to get your revenge.

Destructive behavior of this kind follows regularly upon the obstruction or frustration of any need, psychogenic as well as physiogenic, and is directed toward the person or object responsible for it. For example, if somebody orders you to do something against your will, this somebody is frustrating your need for autonomy. You react with resentment. If he tries to use force, you may attack him. Similarly, if somebody takes your hammer when you are building something and doesn't return it, he becomes a frustrating agent to your need for achievement; you become angry and entertain destructive thoughts toward him. If you are discharged from your job and your need for acquisition is frustrated, you may become angry at your employer. If somebody steals your girl and thereby frustrates your need

for love, you imagine ways of hurting your successful rival.

At first glance it may seem as though the energy of the original need is somehow converted and motivates this new behavior. Experience teaches us that this is not the case. Even in the face of a severe frustration, the original need tension remains, with undiminished intensity. Your anger at the animal who stole your food and your revengeful behavior do not reduce your need for food. It seems, therefore, that a new source of energy is tapped which sustains and directs behavior toward this specific end. We must assume that another need is called into action. This need may be called a *need for retaliation*. It is the motivator of all behavior that has as its goal the destruction of any object or agent which transgresses, obstructs, or denies the gratification of another need. In the weaker stages, the need for retaliation is manifested in feelings of annoyance and restlessness. As the strength of the need increases, the feelings of tension and perturbation increase and are accompanied by phantasies of injuring or destroying the frustrating agent. We may speak of this as the potential stage of need activity. When the frustrated need is still stronger and passes into the kinetic stage, actual retaliative behavior takes place.

Literature is full of examples of frustration and subsequent retaliation. In Charles Dickens' story *David Copperfield*, we find the hero's need for love being frustrated. His subsequent behavior is described as follows:

"I never shall forget how I turned and tumbled, how I wearied myself with thinking about Agnes and this creature; how I considered what I could do, and what ought I to do; how I could come to no other conclusion than the best course for her peace, was to do nothing . . . the poker got into my dozing thoughts besides, and wouldn't come out. I thought, between sleeping and waking, that it was still red-hot, and I snatched it out of the fire, and ran him through the body. I

was so haunted at last by the idea, though I knew there was nothing in it, that I stole into the next room to look at him."

In this example we see, in addition to an expression of the need for retaliation, the relation of conscious thoughts to an underlying need, and how these may sometimes be mistaken for reality.

In Joseph Conrad's story *Lord Jim*, we find that the chief mate is frustrated in his needs for love and attention. Instead of remaining in the potential stage, the expression of the need reaches the kinetic stage and vents itself on substitute objects. Conrad writes: <sup>1</sup>

"I . . . gave up my early morning visit to my ship. It was really very wrong of me, because, though my chief mate was an excellent man all around, he was the victim of such black imaginings that if he did not get a letter from his wife at the expected time he would go quite distracted with rage and jealousy, lose all grip on the work, quarrel with all hands, and either weep in his cabin or develop such a ferocity of temper as all but drove the crew to the verge of mutiny."

We have now two needs whose end situations are identical—the need for destruction and the need for retaliation. If we study only the goals of the behavior, we find it hard to differentiate between the two. But in the case of the need for destruction, the beginning situation is a condition within the individual that leads him to attack the environment. Destruction seems to be an end in itself. In the need for retaliation, the beginning situation is always some person or object in the environment which hinders or obstructs the attainment of other goals. Here, the destructive tendencies are a means of clearing the paths that lead to the gratification of other needs.

Suppose that you are observing a group of boys playing in

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim* (New York, Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1899), p. 156.

the school yard. You see one boy come over to a second boy and punch him in the jaw. Nothing provocative was said or done previous to this action. As far as you can see, the boy who was punched was in no way obstructing or hindering the gratification of the needs of the boy who punched him. Since there was no observable external stimulation, you would judge that this behavior arose from a need for destruction. Under these circumstances you would probably condemn the first boy on the grounds that the attack was unprovoked and unjustifiable. If, now, the second boy turns around and strikes the first boy in return, you tend to sympathize with him. You conclude that the second boy's need for autonomy had been transgressed and obstructed by the unjustifiable attack and that he had, therefore, good reason to retaliate for the assault. You would judge the second boy's behavior as motivated by the need for retaliation.

In court cases, the same distinction is usually made. If one man murders another for no discernible reason, we attribute such behavior to an underlying need for destruction. We condemn it, and our society punishes it severely. When a man kills another man for stealing his wife, or in defense of his own life or property, we tend to judge him more leniently. In some cases, the retaliating individual may even be acquitted. In the latter case, some of the individual's needs were frustrated, and we feel that the behavior was justified.

At the present time we can only regard these two needs as different and independent from one another, since one seems to be aroused by the immediate external situation whereas the other is due to some condition within the organism itself. Nevertheless, the fact that the goals of these two needs are identical is a matter of concern to us. The common element in the goals of behavior has been our chief criterion in assuming the existence of underlying needs

which motivate the behavior in these specific directions. Judged from this criterion all behavior which has injury or destruction as a goal should arise from a single need. "But how," we may ask, "is it possible for the same need to express itself under such diverse circumstances?" An answer to this question must be postponed until we have examined some of the effects produced on the expression of one need by the action of other needs.

§ *Fusions of needs are not consciously determined.*

The constant interplay of psychic forces or needs complicates the superficial aspects of behavior and makes an easy analysis of its motivations almost impossible. Two or more psychogenic needs may combine and collectively determine a common course of behavior that will bring a degree of gratification to each of them. This is, of course, more economical. If a single form of expression will bring gratification to half a dozen needs, both time and effort are saved. Moreover, the combined energies of the needs make more energy available for the achievement of the composite goal than any one of the needs could muster by itself.

These fusions take place automatically outside the field of consciousness. All that the individual is conscious of are the effects of such fusions in the form of wishes and desires for certain objects or situations, and impulses to behave in a way that will make them attainable. The fusion, like the individual needs of which it is composed, can only be known through the effects it produces on thought processes or behavior. In order to discover the existence of needs and estimate their relative intensities, we must study the frequency with which each need enters into fusions with others and the importance of its rôle in determining the wishes, phantasies, and behavior of the individual. We can never, therefore, evaluate the needs of an individual from

a single glimpse into, or even a few observations of his behavior. In order to make such an analysis, we must observe his behavior over a considerable period of time in many different situations and obtain as much information as possible about his thought processes and emotional responses.

Some of these fusions are more or less permanent and are extremely important in influencing our future course of action. These we call *interests*, and they determine in large part the direction in which our major efforts will be exerted. If our chosen professions or vocations are such that they bring gratification to most of the needs in the fusion which determined the interest, we are happy and effective in our work. On the other hand, if they fail to do this, or if we are forced into work that does not fit our major interests, we are inefficient, unhappy, and dissatisfied. In choosing a vocation, therefore, a knowledge of interests and underlying needs is of prime importance.

The function of consciousness in bringing about the gratification of needs is extremely interesting and significant. Consciousness seems to be the meeting place of inner and outer forces. On the one hand it receives information about the internal condition of the organism in the form of sensations, thoughts, wishes, desires, and impulses. These, as we have seen, are the effects produced by the needs. On the other hand, it receives information about the external environment in the form of sensations and perceptions. The job of consciousness is to fit the two kinds of information together and institute the behavior that will bring about a reduction of the inner tensions in this particular environment. This is not always easy. Sometimes a specific tension is so strong that the individual must forsake gratifications available for many other needs in order to provide gratification for the one need which is particularly intense—as when a person is extremely hungry. At other times, the outer

forces become so great that even the gratification of very strong inner forces must be delayed until a more suitable environment is found—as in danger.

So consciousness is driven from both within and without to inaugurate behavior that keeps need tensions at the lowest possible point. When anything interferes with the attainment of a goal that would provide gratification for a strong need or fusion of needs, a new source of energy is made available. Its goal is to clear the path of obstructions in order that the original gratification may take place. In all this we see that the individual is not a machine which responds automatically and willy-nilly to external stimuli, but a highly integrated and well-directed organism picking its way through a complicated environment.



# 7

## THE DESTINY OF NEEDS

§ *Some needs can only be gratified at the expense of other people.*

THE process of finding gratification for our various needs is complicated by other factors. As we survey the goals of the different needs, it becomes clear that some of them can be reached only at the expense of other people. We cannot gratify a need for attention, for example, without frustrating the same need in other people, and often we cannot gratify the need for acquisition without depriving other people of their possessions, and so on. Behavior that brings pleasure to one person, therefore, may bring pain to another. The existence of contradictions of this kind has been recognized for a long time. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) used them as a starting point for his social philosophy.

Hobbes' speculations led him to believe that man in his natural state—that is, without an organized society—could expect no more of life than that it would be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” He described this natural man as primarily selfish and motivated entirely by the expectation of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. In his lust for pleasure, or as we might now say, in his search for direct gratification of his needs, man would inevitably come into conflict with his fellows. The result would be that each individual would have to be constantly on his guard against the

pilferings and attacks of his neighbors. This state of affairs, however, would be painful and intolerable to him inasmuch as this ceaseless vigilance and constant self-defense would deter him from finding gratification for his other needs. In order to reduce this fear of attack and free some of his time for other efforts, Hobbes thought, man sacrificed some of his own pleasures and possessions to organized society; he sacrificed his own pleasure in robbery and violence in order to avoid similar attacks from others.

¶ *Each culture restricts the expression of certain needs in order to avoid conflicts among its individual members.*

It is not necessary for us to enter into a detailed consideration of the validity of Hobbes' point of view. For us it is sufficient to recognize that some of our needs cannot be gratified without conflicting with those of others. As adults we can understand that some form of regulation is necessary if we are going to participate in the benefits of group life. We, therefore, accept the limitations which our culture places upon the expression of certain needs and try to direct our behavior into channels that are socially acceptable. It is interesting to notice, however, that every culture restricts the expression of different needs in varying degrees. For example, in our culture severe restrictions have been placed upon the direct expression of the needs for sex and for destruction whereas relatively few limitations have been placed upon the needs for acquisition, retention, dominance, achievement, autonomy, play, and the like. Other cultures may do quite the reverse; they may restrict the expressions we permit and permit free expression in cases where we impose restrictions. The evolution of societies seems to be a process of finding a workable combination of these conflicting factors—permitting a maximal degree of

gratification to individuals in the group while reducing conflicts among them to a minimum.

Any number of such combinations is feasible, judging from the different cultures we can find in the world today. Each combination has advantages and disadvantages. No one of them is able, under the circumstances, to permit complete freedom of expression to all the needs. It is well to realize, however, that our cultural pattern represents only one possible solution of this very complex problem, and we have no right to suppose that it is fundamentally better than any other. A realization of this fact will probably lead to better understanding and tolerance of other peoples.

Cultures go still further in restricting the expression of needs. From our very earliest childhood a process of restricting the gratification of physical needs is started that seeks to bring the expression of these needs into conformity with the cultural pattern. The need for food is the first to feel the effects of these cultural demands. Instead of feeding the infant when he is hungry, we put him on a feeding schedule. He must learn to wait until the time interval between feedings has expired before his need is again gratified—first feedings every four hours, then the elimination of night feedings, later three meals a day, and so on. After training in feeding comes training in cleanliness—the child must learn to postpone the gratification of his need for urination and defecation until he is in the proper situation. He must learn to wear clothes that hamper his free movements. He must not touch certain parts of his body which yield pleasurable sensations. And so it goes from one form of behavior to another. He cannot have this, and he must not do that. Each prohibition is an attempt to restrict the direct expression of a need and bring it into conformity with the pattern or mores of the group.

As adults we can understand the value of such a pattern-

ing of behavior. Once the pattern has been established, it gives the child some control over his physiological processes and frees him from the necessity of continually following the impulses that arise from these sources. By regulating them to function at specific times he is free, to a large extent, from their demands and is able to direct his efforts uninterruptedly to the attainment of other goals. But how does the infant feel about such efforts to make life easier for him? He has no knowledge of their value or necessity. Perhaps all he knows is that these spontaneous and primitive forms of expression or activity somehow remove annoying and painful conditions and give him pleasant sensations instead. By our training we not only deny him these pleasant sensations, but we demand that he learn to tolerate the unpleasant ones that arise from the growing intensity of the need.

Consider a very young infant in the process of his training. He is awakened from his sleep by sensations arising from his need for food. He cries. Previously this form of behavior has succeeded in bringing both his mother and the food he required. Today he uses the method that has succeeded so well in the past. Something has gone wrong, however. His cries bring his mother but no food. It is true that she whispers to him and says many sweet things which he does not understand, but these do not relieve the unpleasant sensations he is experiencing. The unpleasant sensations become more intense. He cries louder, and still the mother does nothing but cuddle him. How is he to know that this is the first day of his new feeding schedule? To the child this experience must appear, insofar as he is able to grasp it at all, as a frustration of his need for food. He reacts to it in the only way possible in his state of immaturity. He cries and shrieks and struggles in his crib, a behavior pattern which after a time closely resembles an anger response.

This may be the rudimentary expression of the need for retaliation. The infant in his helpless state cannot utilize this energy in an attack on the environment. He, therefore, disposes of it in the only way open to him, that is, through crying, tossing about, and making random movements. These often continue until food is given him or until he is exhausted by his efforts.

A similar reaction can be observed at each prolongation of the interval between feedings and in all other phases of training in which the primitive expression of a need is interrupted or denied. As he grows older and has a better grasp of the situation and greater muscular control, his need for retaliation finds expression in behavior designed to remove, injure, or destroy the person or object which prevents him from reaching the desired goal. After a time he discovers that this antagonistic behavior, too, is unacceptable to the person in charge of his training. When he bites, kicks, or strikes at his mother, he is punished or threatened in return—an external situation that arouses his need for safety. In order to safeguard his future welfare he must now restrain the expression of his need for retaliation as well as that of the need originally frustrated.

We all know, however, that the child does not continue to react in this way to repetitions of the same frustrating situation. After the first few days on a new feeding schedule, he begins to "realize" that what he supposed was frustration is, in reality, only a postponement of gratification. He gradually learns to accept the limitation imposed by the culture and no longer reacts to it with retaliative behavior. And so, step by step, the child's primitive forms of expression and gratification are slowly molded into the cultural pattern. Each step is at first reacted to as though it were a frustration and, after additional experiences, is accepted as a limitation or restriction.

§ *Different needs in the same individual may conflict with each other.*

The restrictions a culture places on the original expression of those physical needs and later on the expressions of those psychogenic needs which conflict with the rights of other people, complicate the individual's problem of finding adequate expression for his needs. There is another complicating factor that arises not from a conflict between need demands and cultural demands, but from the demands of different needs. Let us return to the child who is punished for striking his mother after she has frustrated the expression of one of his needs. The attack on the mother, under these circumstances, is motivated by the child's need for retaliation. The punishment he receives in return, however, arouses his need for safety, and his need for safety motivates his behavior, the goal of which is to remove him from the unfavorable and dangerous environment. Clearly it is impossible for him to attack the environment and withdraw from it at one and the same time. The goals of these two needs lie in opposite directions, and he cannot gratify them simultaneously. A fusion of these two needs is impossible. He must, therefore, deny expression to both or express one and restrain the other. If the two needs are of equal strength, the child may be deadlocked. Under these circumstances he is unable to behave in an adequate manner compatible with either need. Only if one need is stronger than the other, can he behave in an appropriate way, and his behavior will then be determined by the stronger need.

§ *The suppression of need expressions.*

Life is full of such conflicts between motivations. Let us consider another example. Suppose you are building a model airplane. For the sake of simplicity, let us assume

that this activity is motivated by your need for achievement alone. Unexpectedly your best friend drops in with two tickets to a baseball game and invites you to join him. To do so would gratify your need for affiliation. But you cannot stay at home and work on your airplane and at the same time go to the ball game. You must choose either the one or the other. If the two needs, or fusions of needs, which would find gratification in these two diverse forms of activity are of equal or almost equal strength, you will find it very difficult to decide which to choose. You are undecided and weigh the advantages of one against those of the other. If, however, the two needs, or fusions of needs, are not so nearly balanced, the stronger will be gratified while the weaker will be denied expression. Under these conditions you can "make up your mind" without very much hesitation. Nevertheless, whenever a conflict of this kind arises, one need or fusion of needs must be denied expression in order to clear the path for the gratification of others. The clearing process may be so complete that the denied needs no longer find any kind of representation in consciousness. To all intents and purposes, at least as far as the individual himself is consciously aware, these needs have become non-existent. The process by which this is accomplished is called *suppression*. One need or fusion of needs suppresses the expression of others.

#### § *The concept of the subconscious.*

Usually a suppression of this kind is temporary. When the baseball game is over and you have satisfied your need for affiliation, you go home and work on your model airplane and gratify the need for achievement which was previously suppressed. What happens to the suppressed need during this interval? Since the need is a source of energy, we cannot suppose that it has been destroyed. From the nature of the

need we must assume that it continues to strive for expression even though it is not represented in the field of consciousness. Sanford's experiments, which were mentioned earlier in connection with the need for food (see page 54), lend support to this assumption. It would seem that some kind of mental activity of which we are not conscious is being carried on.

There is other evidence to support the belief that complex mental processes are at work outside the field of consciousness. Perhaps you have had the experience of trying to solve a difficult problem in mathematics, or of making a choice between two alternative courses of action. You try to solve the problem in one way and then in another way, but the solution always eludes you. Before you reach a satisfactory answer, other strong needs intervene and command your attention. The whole problem is now suppressed, and you become absorbed in a new activity. The problem is apparently completely forgotten. Then, while you are busy with your new activity, the solution to your problem suddenly "pops" into your mind. Certainly the problem did not solve itself. Some form of mental activity, outside the field of consciousness, must have continued work on the problem in order to produce the correct solution which consciousness, itself, was not able to discover. The phenomenon is especially marked at times when you have pondered over a problem for hours and then go to sleep. Frequently, upon awakening in the morning the answer is ready-made in your mind. This kind of experience is so common, in everyday life, that we often hear the advice, "Go home and sleep on it."

In the light of such phenomena we are forced to assume a realm of mental activity that does not possess the quality of being conscious. For descriptive purposes we may refer to this region as the *subconscious* in order to differentiate



it from the conscious part of which we are aware at any given moment. In our earlier discussion we found that consciousness was somewhat like a battlefield on which strong needs, or a fusion of needs, are striving to control the focus of attention and thereby assume priority in finding gratification in the environment. A similar battle is being waged between the subconscious and the conscious, except that the need intensities involved are weaker.

§ *The dynamics of mental activity.*

We can think of the dynamics of mind as a kind of hierarchy of needs striving for expression. At the top, commanding the focus of attention, is the strongest need or fusion of needs. Just below, less clear than the former but still invested with the quality of consciousness, are the representatives of other strong needs. These vary in clearness. Some are quite distinct, whereas others are so dim that we are scarcely aware of them. The degree of clearness is again dependent upon the relative intensities of the needs underlying these mental representatives. Below these, in the subconscious, are representatives of weaker needs. These, too, may become conscious when the dynamics of the situation change.

The dynamics of the situation may change in several different ways. A latent need may attain a conscious status through an increase in its own intensity sufficient to force entry into consciousness. When busily engaged in an activity, for example, you may suddenly be interrupted by sensations of hunger. Second, a latent need may succeed in forcing its representatives into consciousness when the intensity of the needs that suppressed it has been reduced through gratification. When you are very hungry, you find it difficult to think of anything but "something to eat," but as soon as food has been obtained, thoughts connected with other forms of gratification replace those referring to food,

Third, a latent need may become conscious when an opportunity for easy gratification in the environment is chanced upon. You may have no thought of food, and yet if you pass a food shop, you may become aware of slight hunger sensations and go in and buy something. And last, a latent need may become conscious if it fuses with other needs whose combined intensity is sufficient to crowd out still other needs that were occupying our attention. The needs for food and affiliation may not be strong enough to force their way into consciousness, but while you are engaged in work, a friend may stop and suggest that a cup of coffee and a snack to eat might be appropriate. The combined strength of the two needs is then sufficient to take command of consciousness. You drop what you were doing and go to the corner drug-store where both these needs may find a simultaneous gratification.

We can think of the mind as a dynamic pyramid of forces of varying intensities. The peak of the pyramid is brilliantly lighted by the quality we call the *focus of attention*. As we go down from the peak, the illumination becomes dimmer and dimmer, then fades into darkness. Each of the forces fights ruthlessly to push its representatives into the lighted region and finally into the brilliant peak where the chances of obtaining overt expression and gratification are the greatest. But it can only do so by overpowering and ousting those forces already there, since the lighted region is very limited. Brute strength is the determining factor, and sometimes the forces "gang up" and push a single representative to the fore to supplant those in the leading positions. And so the mental life goes on. Each need seeks expression and gratification at the expense of others. When this has been achieved, it must temporarily retire and make room for other claimants. But soon the need gathers strength again and joins in the "free-for-all," and the process is repeated.

§ *The subconscious as a store-house of knowledge.*

The concept of the subconscious is also valuable from another point of view. It is clear that only an infinitesimal part of an individual's knowledge can be in consciousness at any given moment. Somewhere in the mind must be a store-house of all the knowledge a person has accumulated in various ways through the process of growing up and living through numerous experiences. This vast store-house, upon which one can call for information when he requires it, must contain a fantastic number of past experiences in finding gratification for needs together with the consequences of these past efforts and the feelings they aroused, as well as a tremendous mass of factual material about the nature of the external environment and the laws underlying its operation. If all the data available to any one of us were written down, it would fill more than the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

We do not know the manner in which all these past experiences, feelings, sensations, perceptions, impressions, conclusions, and so on, are recorded in the nervous system. The task is so gigantic that it defies all powers of imagination at the present time. Far less do we understand the intricate mechanisms that operate and bring the material pertinent to any given problem to consciousness without appreciable delay and with few errors. It is undoubtedly the greatest achievement of the evolutionary process.

We do know, however, that the capacity of the mind to assimilate, record, reproduce, and relate experiences to each other varies widely from one individual to another. This capacity we usually speak of as *intelligence*. We also know some of the factors that determine the association of simple ideas with each other. These are summed up in the *laws of association*. It has not been clear, however, why the word

*white*, commonly associated with *black*, sometimes breaks the rule and is associated with *bride*, for example, whereas *black* becomes associated with *death*, or any number of other words, images, or feelings. In other words the laws of association do not enable us to predict in advance what the association to a particular word or experience will be. At best they can only tell us what the majority of associative responses to a given concept are in a neutral laboratory situation.

A study of thought sequences reveals that over and above the purely intellectual associative bonds which are fairly well covered by the laws of association, there is a still more important determining factor that is closely related to feeling. There is every reason to suppose that both the underlying feeling and the sequence of association are determined by a need seeking conscious recognition. Furthermore, the selection of these associations is not a conscious process but one wholly determined at a subconscious level. It is as though the need swept through the great subconscious storehouse and collected all the available material pertaining to its gratification. Not only are images of all possible objects and situations awakened but so, in addition, are all the ways and means that may be employed in attaining gratification in the present situation. These, it appears, are gathered while the need is still in a latent state and are held in readiness to be pushed up into consciousness at the very first opportune moment. As the environment changes, and with it the possibilities of gratification, the memories of past experiences most similar and pertinent to the present external conditions are sifted out. They are the first to be pushed into consciousness when the opportunity is given. This is, of course, only an attempt to visualize a process that is completely unknown to us, and has, therefore, no basis in reality. Like every analogy, the only purpose of this one is to bring

a very intricate and complicated process somewhere near the experience of an ordinary person and thereby help our understanding.

Whatever the nature of the process may be by which the sequences of thoughts in consciousness are produced, it is fairly certain that a study of these sequences reveals more data concerning the status of underlying needs and their goals than any other technique yet discovered. Need tensions can only gain representation in consciousness through the images they succeed in planting there. It is safe to assume that the meanings various phenomena have for us at a given moment depend upon the possibility of gratifying our needs either now or in the future. We all know how difficult it is to master subject-matter that is unrelated to our primary interests and how easy it is to master information we "need." Similarly, in everyday life we remember the many experiences that have significance for us and forget the thousands of others to which we are indifferent. This significance is not inherent in the particular object or situation in the external world but is subconsciously put there by us and signalizes that this experience or object may be of value in providing gratification.

#### § *Conscious and subconscious activity.*

From all of this it appears that a great deal more mental activity is carried on subconsciously than consciously. This is probably true. Experiments indicate that the subconscious mind is not only able to solve difficult mathematical problems without the aid of consciousness, but that it can produce beautiful poetry, prose, music, and other creative material as well. In many cases the subconscious appears to be far more effective and creative than does consciousness itself. According to one theory, many of the great masterpieces were conceived and developed in the subconscious

long before they reached consciousness. Therefore, when the conscious level was finally reached, the composition came as a finished product, which simply had to be recorded.

The remarkable activity of the subconscious does not mean, however, that we could get along without consciousness. On the contrary, consciousness seems to be the highest court of appeal. A large part of our everyday behavior has been perfected to the point where conscious intervention and guidance are no longer required. For example, when you begin to learn to drive an automobile, you are conscious of every detail. Every minor hazard on the road finds an easy entrance into consciousness, and every response is consciously determined. As you gain more experience, fewer and fewer of your responses are directed in this way. After a time you may drive through busy thoroughfares, avoid trucks, and stop at red lights without being fully aware of what is going on or how you are responding. When this stage is reached, your conscious mind may be occupied with other problems while the subconscious attends to the driving. Only when unusual circumstances arise, in which a difficult choice must be made, or new behavior is called for, do you become fully aware of the situation. It is then that past experiences and possible ways of handling the situation crowd into consciousness and help decide what to do.

The chief function of consciousness seems to be to decide between the claims for gratification of different powerful needs and to integrate motor responses for which no subconscious pattern has been developed. Since consciousness is in direct contact with the external world, it is in a position to evaluate the possibilities for gratification existing there and to plan ways and means by which the desired goal may be attained. As soon as a chosen course of behavior has been repeated a number of times and proved adequate, it is gradually turned over to subconscious control. The result is that

more than a single need can be expressed at a time even though the needs involved are distinct from one another and do not form a fusion. This is certainly a tremendous advantage for it adds to the efficiency of the organism and liberates consciousness from constant attention to the details of everyday life.

§ *The unconscious and the repression of need expressions.*

The concept of the subconscious, which functions along the same patterns as those of consciousness itself, helps us to understand a great many psychological phenomena observed in everyday life. But it does not cover them all. There are, in addition, many psychological events which cannot be understood in terms of conscious or subconscious activity. Failure to recall names, slips of the tongue, dreams, compulsions are a few of these events which will be discussed in more detail later. We must therefore assume that there is a still deeper section in our dynamic pyramid which is completely submerged. This region we may call the *unconscious*. Here, too, are strong desires for need gratification and memories of experiences or phantasies in which such gratification was obtained. These, however, have not only been crowded out of consciousness, but they are permanently cut off from reappearing there in their true form. This crowding out of certain forms of need expression we call *repression* in order to differentiate it from the process of suppression which refers to the temporary disposal of mental contents in the subconscious. The latter may reappear in consciousness when favorable circumstances arise, but the former are permanently banned.

The repressed forms of expression or gratification are not, however, rendered inactive in this manner. They are being constantly activated by the needs that seek to push

them to the fore where they will gain conscious recognition and lead to the desired forms of gratification. Although the action of other needs prevents their expression, these repressed desires affect our entire psychological life. Denied an entry into consciousness in their original form, they resort to substitutes of one kind or another which are not subjected to the same taboos.

Through the techniques of psychoanalysis and hypnosis, we have accumulated a wealth of material concerning the nature of unconscious processes and their influence upon conscious thought and behavior. There is every reason to believe that a large part of the unconscious is associated with the primitive forms of need gratification that were permanently frustrated in the course of our training or that had to be inhibited because of their incompatibility with other needs. The expression of each one of these needs in their original form is believed, by the individual, to involve dangers to his own welfare. In order to defend himself from these dangers, he denies their existence through repression.

The repression, however, does not solve the problem completely. These early forms of gratification were a source of great pleasure to the child, and whenever the same need arises in later life, it tends to express itself in this same primitive way that represents the easiest and most direct path to maximum gratification. Only by the action of other needs are they prevented from expressing themselves in these early repressed forms and forced to seek substitute methods of gratification. The problem is, therefore, an eternal one, and the remainder of our study will be largely concerned with a consideration of the measures that may be used to meet these primitive need demands and thereby escape from the dangers believed to be involved in their repression.



## 8

### GROWING INTO A SOCIAL INDIVIDUAL

§ *What is the concept of self and where does it come from?*

WHAT is the *self* which we consciously experience as "I"? Where does it come from, and what are its functions? Why does it cut off some forms of need expression which then harass it in its normal functioning and permit free expression to others?

We cannot find answers to these questions through an examination of ourselves. Try as we will we cannot remember a period in our lives when the concept of "I" did not exist. The concept is, in fact, necessary to our thinking and anything not labeled with "I," in memory, is not included as a part of ourselves. The concept of "I" is a prerequisite—and our thinking about ourselves cannot go beyond it. Likewise we cannot recall a time when the "I" did not have the functions it now possesses. From introspection it seems as though the concept of "I" must be innate.

This evidence alone, however, is unconvincing. When we study the newly-born infant, we find that he is equipped with a complex nervous system which is ready to communicate stimuli from the outer world to the higher nerve centers. Here connections are made with motor nerves whose function it is to activate the muscles. To the majority of external stimuli, however, the infant does not respond. He

remains, as far as we can tell, entirely indifferent to them. There are, nevertheless, a few specific forms of stimulation to which the infant responds with great regularity and always in the identical manner (such as sucking). These are inherited behavior patterns, or *reflexes* common to all members of the species, and designed to protect the organism from certain types of stimulation that may be injurious to it. We may regard them as servants of the need for safety.

At this point in the child's development there are no indications that an awareness of an "I" exists. There is, in fact, no evidence that thinking, as we know it, is present at all. The reflexes require no conscious guidance. Indeed, many of them lie outside the field of consciousness, even in adults, and most of them are beyond conscious control. For example, if you are in a dark room and you turn on a bright light, the pupils of your eyes will contract. This is known as the *pupillary* reflex. You are not aware of the response you are making to these changed conditions, nor can you prevent it from taking place. As long as our behavior remains on the reflex level, we can dispense with consciousness and complex thinking processes. There are no choices to be made. Each response runs off automatically when the organism is exposed to the appropriate stimulus.

¶ *The child must learn to differentiate himself from his environment.*

The process of learning begins very early in life. During the first days the infant responds to stimulating conditions wholly in terms of his innate behavior patterns. In some cases these responses are adequate, but in others, although the sensations are similar, they are inadequate. He must learn to discriminate between similar sensations and discover different response patterns appropriate to the respective stimulating conditions. For example, one of the infant's

innate behavior responses is crying when he experiences sensations of pain. When a diaper pin is pricking him, he registers the fact by crying. Ordinarily this brings the mother or nurse to his side, and the painful stimulus is removed. If this does not take place promptly, the infant not only cries but he tosses and squirms about in his crib. By means of such behavior he may succeed in finding a position in which the pain is alleviated. This behavior is, then, appropriate to the situation because it removes the unpleasant form of stimulation.

There are other stimulating conditions that give rise to painful sensations. These, however, are within the organism itself and are caused by strong need tensions. The infant, at the beginning of life, cannot differentiate between these two unpleasant sensations. The result is that when he is hungry, he cries and squirms, just as he does when a pin is pricking him if the painful condition is not promptly remedied. In other words, since he is unable to discriminate between these two sensations, he employs the same form of behavior to meet both emergencies.

Through successive experiences the infant must learn to distinguish between these two similar sensations. He must learn that different forms of behavior must be used if he is to rid himself of the painful conditions. Squirming in the crib may sometimes relieve the prick of a pin, but it will not remove the sensations brought on by hunger. The latter can be accomplished only through the coöperation of the mother. She must place the nipple to his lips in order that another innate pattern of complicated movements consisting of sucking and swallowing can be initiated. These sucking activities acquire a pleasurable quality because they relieve the unpleasant sensations arising from the need for food. As long as the mother promptly gratifies the child's need, there is little indication that the

child thinks of her as a being apart from himself. The first weeks of our existence as individual human beings are probably confined largely to these poorly differentiated sensations and the feelings that accompany them.

But the culture begins very early to make demands on the child. The mother does not feed the child the moment he begins to cry. As we pointed out before, a schedule is set, and the child must learn to endure his unpleasant sensations until the environment finds it expedient to help him. During this interval he may squirm and cry as much as he pleases with no results. He gradually discovers that this particular type of unpleasant feeling cannot be disposed of by efforts of his own. Something else over which he has no immediate control is required. He, therefore, saves his energy and learns to endure the unpleasantness. By means of such training he is forced to take the first step in differentiating himself from his environment.

Each lengthening of the interval between feeding times is, as we have seen, regarded by the child as a frustration. Unaware that food will be provided at a later time, he reacts to the situation as though it were being completely withheld. The child, from his earliest days, reacts to such a deprivation or frustration with a behavior pattern that closely resembles anger. These feelings of resentment are directed toward the mother as soon as she is recognized as something apart from himself, since it is she who denies the gratification. The result is that, from the time the feeding training begins, two opposing emotional patterns develop toward the same person—the rudiments of a love relationship built on the gratifications the mother provides and the primitive resentments arising from her denials. This phenomenon, known as *ambivalence*, is found throughout life in varying degrees, although, as adults, we usually repress one or the other emotion. Through repeated experience,

however, the infant learns that what was at first regarded as a frustration is in reality only a postponement of gratification. His physical organism gradually adjusts itself to the increased interval, and he no longer reacts to the delay with resentment. The affective (feeling) relationship with the mother is strengthened, and the child anticipates her appearance.

§ *The child must also learn to discriminate between objects in his environment.*

It is not enough, however, for the infant to learn to differentiate himself from the external environment. He must also learn to discriminate between the various objects in that environment and the services to which they may be put. Since most of his gratifications, up to this time, have been obtained through the use of the mouth, he naturally uses it in investigating the qualities of other objects. The result is that the baby carries all kinds of things to his mouth and attempts to suck them. Parents often become worried about this practice, fearing that germs will make the child ill. Why more children do not become ill in this way is a mystery which medical science has not yet solved. Some physicians believe that during the first years of life the child has a native immunity which protects him. This mouthing of objects is one way in which the child becomes acquainted with the world about him. By this means he learns to distinguish his bottle, and the pleasure that it gives, from other objects surrounding him.

Even when this point in his development has been reached, the child has probably not yet formed an idea of himself as an "I." This requires still further experiences and more complicated differentiations. During early infancy the child grabs his toe in much the same way that he grasps his rattle or any other object. The sensations he ex-

periences, however, are different. When he seizes his rattle, he experiences sensations from the organs of touch in the fingers alone; when the toe is grasped, such sensations are experienced in the fingers and toe simultaneously. The sensation in the latter case will, therefore, be more intense and more complex than in the former. These variations in the complexity of resulting sensations serve as bases for a discrimination between his own body and other objects in his environment. Through repeated experiences of this kind the concept of a physical self is gradually developed.

Meanwhile, other needs assert themselves within the child. The child may, for instance, derive great pleasure from throwing his rattle from the crib to the floor, but he soon discovers that the rattle does not return to him in response to his crying. Here the environment resists his wishes. As he grows older, these wishes will remain unsatisfied if he does not make efforts of his own to fulfil them. He must learn to creep or walk in order to obtain the objects he desires. As his demands become more complex, he must also learn to talk in order to inform the persons around him of his wants and enlist their coöperation in satisfying them. And so, step by step, he learns to distinguish the "I," with its needs and sensations, from the "not-I," the environment from which something must be obtained and which makes demands upon him.

§ *The rôle of toilet training in the development of the concept of self.*

In all of this the baby is relatively helpless. Because of his physiological immaturity he is almost completely dependent upon the environment. He must take what the environment is willing to give without being able to reverse the process. With the beginning of toilet training a new element is introduced into the situation. The child is now expected to

give out products of his body—urine and feces—only at specific times and in specific places. He soon begins to notice that what he does about elimination has a considerable influence on the people who are taking care of him. By simply holding back for a short time and enduring the unpleasantness, he may get a great deal of attention from his mother or nurse. The mother now begs the child to do something for her instead of the child begging her.

The tables are turned, and the child has a weapon with which to combat his environment. Many children use this weapon as a means of obtaining gratification for other needs. It gives them a power over their social environment that can scarcely be overestimated. By means of a little self-restraint the child is often able to upset the household effectively. He is, for the first time, able to frustrate those who, up until now, have frustrated him. Through the different kinds of training and the effects of his behavior on the environment, his concept of himself as a psychological individual grows.

#### § *Further stages in development.*

By the time the child has reached the age of three or four years the fundamental process of differentiation between himself and the environment has usually been completed. In place of "Johnnie wants this," or "Johnnie wants that," the child is now able to say, "I want this," or "I want that." The child has developed a concept of "I" as something separate and apart from the environment. An important step in his development has been taken.

But the process is not yet ended. Having learned to differentiate between himself and other objects, he must learn to discriminate between the animate and inanimate. The infant's experience has been limited to himself and his contacts with people. It has been composed of sensations, de-

sires, and feelings. In consequence he believes that all other objects, the inanimate as well as the animate, possess human characteristics like his own. This, as we have seen, is not only characteristic of the child but of primitive peoples as well. The primitive, too, believes that inanimate objects have an animate existence similar to his own.

In the opening chapter, we described the primitive's tendency to account for all natural phenomena in terms of the "spirits" residing in them which may have "good" or "evil" designs on him. In consequence he reacts to the inanimate objects as though they were alive. The child does the same. When he accidentally bumps into a chair or table while running through the living-room, he does not, during this early stage, attribute the injury to his own carelessness. He thinks of the chair or the table as having evil designs upon him—as though its actions were intentional. In fact, he may loudly proclaim that the "chair hurt me" or the "table hit me." He may also retaliate for the injury by striking the "naughty" object in return. Only after many experiences does the child learn that some objects are alive like himself and others are not.

The assumption of responsibility for his own behavior is another important step in the psychological development of the child. He must learn to understand that he, by his actions, causes certain things to happen, and that certain consequences may result from them. No longer can he think of himself as a mere plaything in the hands of outer forces. His conception of self must be enlarged and ramified. He must begin to see himself as an individual "I" with certain needs that must be expressed if he is to be well and happy, as an "I" with a reservoir of energy at his disposal that can produce certain changes in the outer world, and as an "I" which must direct these energies into specific channels, marked out by social restrictions. He must learn that when



this "I" chooses to overstep these restrictions, unpleasant consequences in the form of other need frustrations will probably result. Through experience this "I" must find ways and means of directing its need energies into the paths that will bring a maximum of pleasure (gratification) with a minimum of pain (frustration).

Adults usually speak of the "happy days of childhood." As we look back upon those days, they do seem to have been quite happy. But they could hardly have been as happy as we remember them when we think of the many difficult adjustments and differentiations that had to be made. The child has no inner guide for his actions. Only through experience can he learn to distinguish between the inner and outer forces that push him first one way and then another. Only through experience can he learn to control these forces and avoid unpleasant consequences. Experience is a hard master. Many frustrations, confusions, and doubts must be endured in the course of "growing-up."

§ *Early training may have lasting effects on the individual's attitudes.*

The consequences of early training on the psychological development of the child can scarcely be overestimated. Ordinarily we think that if the baby has plenty of good food, fresh air, and sound sleep, our job is done. The psychological development, many think, will start when the child begins to talk and walk and take an active interest in his surroundings. This is a false impression. Psychological development begins at the moment of birth, and although good physical care is essential for the future welfare of the child, psychological care is equally important.

In the course of training the child the transitions must be made easy, gradual, and consistent. We must never lose sight of the limitations of the tiny organism with which we

are dealing. A change that may seem very slight to us from an adult point of view may be enormous to the child. Consider the example we have used before of the greatly increased intervals between feeding times. The child becomes hungry at the previously appointed hour and expects to be fed. After a time he becomes angry and begins to scream. He is using every method at his disposal to obtain help in removing this unpleasant and increasingly painful condition. But no help appears. How does the child feel under these circumstances? This question can probably best be answered by considering yourself in an analogous situation. How would you feel if you were alone somewhere and got your foot caught between some rocks? At first you would probably not be alarmed. You would try to free yourself. Finding that impossible, you would shout for help as loudly as you could. As the pressure on your foot increased and the pain became more intense, you would scream louder and louder. If no help arrived, you would become concerned about your situation, then anxious, and after a time panic-stricken. Is there any reason to suppose that the infant reacts differently? The pains developed from his need for food are probably just as unbearable to the infant as the pain in your foot would be to you. When all his efforts fail to bring relief, the situation begins to appear hopeless and desperate. The need for safety is aroused under these circumstances, together with accompanying feelings of anxiety and fear.

The important thing to realize is that if such circumstances are repeated a few times, the feeling of anxiety becomes attached to the appearance of the need tension. At the first sign of hunger the child will then react with anxiety—as though the terrible experience is going to happen again. This would be serious enough if it were confined to the need for food, but, as we shall see, there is a tendency on the part of the child to attach this feeling to other need

tensions as well. We can understand this reaction, too, if we realize that in these early days, when discriminations are poor, all need tensions are probably experienced as merely unpleasant or painful, with no sharp line of demarcation between them. Long delays in gratification or abrupt changes in schedule may cause the child to develop an intolerance for all need tensions. An awareness of them becomes a signal for an anxiety reaction that can only be allayed by prompt gratification. We all know adults who react in this manner. They cannot endure delay in the gratification of their desires. They want what they want when they want it and become impetuous and anxious as soon as anything is denied. They are not particularly pleasant people to live with, and they make life very difficult for themselves as well as for others.

Although it is a far cry from infancy and training in feeding to impetuous adulthood, we find in personality studies that the latter is frequently the outcome of the former. The point is that once a particular emotional response becomes associated with a particular event, it is extremely difficult to break the association. Each appearance of the same event, or one remotely related to it, is automatically responded to with the same emotional pattern.

Similar reactions in the child may be developed through an abrupt change of food. If a new form of food, with which the child has no acquaintance, is forced upon him, he may refuse to eat. If the mother or nurse remains insistent, an excessive need tension may develop in the child that again leads to anxiety and antagonism. Instead of a warm, trustful, and loving relationship with the mother we may find, under these circumstances, a feeling of fear, resentment, suspicion, and distrust. Here, probably more than anywhere else, we can see the necessity for the cultivation of a wholesome relationship between infant and mother.

If the child has associated positive emotional responses through close contact, understanding care, and consistent gratifications, he feels secure and supported by her presence. He will have the courage to try new foods and can be more easily induced to give up his previous pleasures and accept or investigate new ones. In other words, the child has the feeling that he is not going along alone, but that he has a trusted person with him upon whom he can rely.

Other permanent personality characteristics may also originate at this time in the child's development. There is some evidence to indicate that the needs for dominance and acquisition, for example, may be greatly strengthened through early eating habits. The function of eating is primarily concerned with getting something from the environment or controlling it for one's own ends. If the child has been inadequately fed or trained, there is a residue of wanting some one to do something—that is, to give something to him—or of getting more in one way or another. The result may well be that inadequate training during the first months of life will develop a greedy individual who always wants to get something from others or to control them.

This is rather characteristic of our culture at the present time. We all know people who never seem to be able to get enough. Regardless of how much money they have acquired, they are continually driven on to get more. In such people there seems to be a very deep feeling of insecurity that can only be alleviated by getting more and more from others. Tangible objects have become substitutes for the intangible something they craved in their infancy and could not get. The same emotional pattern is transferred from one experience to another that only remotely resembles it. Our competitive system suits the greedy

and dominating individual since it not only permits but highly prizes such behavior. At the same time it offers him the possibility of expressing many of the antagonistic impulses that may have become associated with his early frustrations. In some cultures, as well as in some strata of our own culture, which permit far more leniency in feeding training, the needs for dominance and acquisition seem, in large part, to be absent.

What has been said about feeding can be applied equally well to toilet training. The same factors come into play except that by the time training begins, the child's attitude toward the mother has been partially determined. In feeding it was a case of the infant's getting more from the environment. In toilet training, it is the reverse—the child must now hold back or retain until the proper time and place for elimination. If the child is not gradually trained to do this through love for his mother, but instead is treated harshly, anxieties and antagonisms are aroused. Here, too, there are indications that a severe frustration at this level may result in an overaccentuation of such a need as retention. The individual may become niggardly in his relations to the environment—unable to give up what he has.

¶ *How can the child be induced to conform to the cultural pattern?*

This early training illustrates the methods by which a culture imposes patterns upon its members. In such patterning at least two factors are at work. On one side the original need tension is striving to attain its natural form of gratification and the pleasure attached to it, and on the other side the cultural agent (or representative), the mother or nurse, is striving to channel the expression of the need into specific patterns which the culture has adopted.

In our culture, we generally utilize one of two needs in

order to persuade the child that he must conform to the cultural pattern. The need for love which we have already discussed at some length is one of them. If the child has received sufficient gratification of this need, love can be used to induce him to give up some of the pleasures attached to the need that is being diverted into new channels. It is a simple exchange of need gratifications in which he accepts certain restrictions or substitute forms of expression of one need in order to safeguard or increase the gratification of another. This is certainly the ideal way.

We must be careful not to start specific training before the child is physiologically ready for it, and we must not try to carry it through too quickly. If these two cautions are observed, the child is likely to show little resentment to the sacrifices the cultural training demands of him. There is also evidence to indicate that the child, as he matures, is much more willing to give up primitive methods of gratification and go on to new forms if he has been granted ample satisfaction on the original level. If he is forced to give them up before he is ready to go to the next step, there is always an unconscious tendency to return to the level at which he was not given sufficient satisfactions and seek further gratification.

A second need may be used in training—the need for safety with its accompanying emotion of fear. It is possible to arouse this need through threats, punishments, and coercions of all sorts. The use of these techniques, however, does not guide the child through love and faith into desirable channels, but literally forces him into them through fear for his own safety. At least that is the way the child probably sees the situation. There is no easy transition from early forms of gratification to substitutes provided and valued by the environment. Nor are there other pleasant

forms of gratification to sustain the child while he discovers that the alternative activities may also be agreeable and satisfying. The expression of the original need is thwarted by the arousal of another need that is even more imperative in its demands—namely, the need for safety. At the same time, as we have seen, the need for retaliation is aroused in proportion to the strength of the need that is being frustrated. Although overt expression of this need may be restrained, it does affect the child's attitude toward the person who administers the training—the mother or the nurse. How different the effects of these methods on the outlook of the child may be, even in the first months of life! In one family a child accepts the cultural patterning in the security of his mother's love, which he prizes highly; in another home an antagonistic infant—fearful and distrustful of his mother—still longs for a prohibited form of need gratification which yielded him pleasure, but in which he is afraid to indulge.

By means of frustrations or restrictions of primitive needs the child's concept of self gradually becomes more sharply defined. Each denial has some effect upon the developing organism. The opposition between what "I" want and what "I" can have or express, without coming into conflict with environmental and cultural forces, becomes strengthened, and the distinction between the two is reinforced. Gradually the child grasps this distinction, and slowly learns to curb, control, or redirect his primitive need expressions into substitute forms of behavior. The manner in which he will deal with his need tensions in the future as well as his relations with his immediate social environment will depend on the attitudes he developed toward them in the course of his early training. Thus the foundations of his future personality are laid.

- ¶ *Careful guidance of sexual expressions during infancy is essential for adequate adjustments later on.*

Other adjustments lie ahead. At about the fourth or fifth year, the need for sex reaches the peak of its infantile form. The child shows an interest in the functions of his body; he asks where he came from and how he got here; he persistently questions his parents on the differences between "little boys" and "little girls." At the same time the genital region is highly sensitized and yields pleasurable sensations when stroked or rubbed. The discovery of this new pleasure is destined to play an important rôle in the psychological development of the child. The manner in which the need expression is handled at this time, the way in which his questions are answered, will determine, in large part, his future sexual adjustment as well as many aspects of his emotional life in general. Its importance, therefore, cannot be exaggerated. One can almost say that at this point the past and the future of the child most nearly meet. If the earlier training has been adequate; if the child has been guided by love, patience, and understanding, rather than by fear and coercion, to give up some of his infantile pleasures in the interest of safeguarding his affectionate ties to his parents; if he has been taught to accept substitute forms of expression for undesirable need demands; and if he has other suitable outlets in his environment, this new step in his development will entail no great difficulties. The child will express an interest in sex differences; he may practise an infantile form of masturbation for a time and then relinquish it as he relinquished earlier pleasure-yielding activities. He will find substitute forms of expression for the need and pass on to the next stage in his development. There will be no frictions or antagonisms and no strong



residual desires to return to this early form of gratification. The mother-child relationship will remain on a secure footing and become strengthened through the sacrifice the child makes to retain her love.

Unfortunately, most children in our culture are not in this enviable situation. Having been coerced through fear of punishment or loss of the mother's love and support into giving up earlier pleasures, the child may view the appearance of this need with mixed feelings. On the one hand, his past training may have developed the attitude that need tensions are dangerous and their expression brings stern prohibitions which in turn arouse painful sensations and feelings of anxiety. Or there may be left-over, residual cravings for need pleasures that were not adequately gratified in the earlier stages of development, together with the fear that this new form of gratification will also be denied him. Under such circumstances this new pleasure acquires an exaggerated significance. The child will seek to safeguard it by secretiveness, fearing that the mother will deprive him of it as she deprived him of other pleasures.

Often the individual is made to feel unworthy, rejected, unloved, and unwanted. Unfortunately, the more he feels himself unloved, the stronger becomes the impulse to find pleasure from his own body. This activity becomes a compensation for the lack of other gratifications he should get from the environment. He is, so to speak, driven into a position where he must love himself. In this, however, he has no security, for the more he compensates in this way, the more anxiety he develops. And so he is caught in a vicious circle. Fears and antagonisms toward his environment are the result.

In justice to parents we should say that there is a superstition that infantile masturbation, if permitted, seriously injures the emotional development of the child. Every bit

of available evidence indicates, to the contrary, that this stage of development is a normal one through which all children pass on their way to becoming adults. In most cases it is of short duration. The child will abandon the practice as soon as he or she is ready to take the next step in growing-up. How soon this will be depends in large part on the earlier training of the child, the mother-child relationship, and the adequacy of gratifications of other needs in the environment.

When he has succeeded in passing through this phase of development, the child's fundamental training in controlling his own need tensions is completed. The foundations of his social personality have been laid and are ready for the complicated superstructure which is to follow.

## 9

### THE INTEGRATION OF THE PERSONALITY

§ *During early infancy the child looks to his parents for guidance in resolving his conflicts.*

AS WE have learned, the early training of the child determines, in large part, his future attitude toward his own need tensions and his social environment. Each step in the training brought him into a conflict between the demands of his own needs and the demands which the culture makes upon its individual members. At each step the individual had to restrict the expression of one of his fundamental physical needs and divert their surplus energies into other socially approved channels. This, we know, is a very complicated process for the immature child with many obstacles in his path.

Although the road has been difficult, the child who has had the love, understanding, and psychological support of his parents has not had to travel it alone. By consistent, patient, and tolerant training his parents have guided him gently along the proper path, permitting him to find some degree of enjoyment along the way. The child has had, so to speak, an opportunity to explore the possibilities of the country through which he passed and has relinquished its pleasurable possibilities in favor of the greater opportunities that lie ahead. Such a child faces the future with confidence. He has learned to find substitute gratification of

these physical needs without jeopardizing the gratification of others. Fears and resentments are relatively low and do not materially hinder his progress. When new obstacles arise, he looks to his parents to show him the way in which they may be circumvented.

¶ *The child soon reaches a point in his development at which he might find his own way out of his conflicts.*

But the child's development soon reaches a point at which his parents can no longer act as the sole and only guides. New conflicts arise, not between himself and the outer world but between his own inner need demands. The goals of these conflicting needs are probably not entirely clear to the child himself. He finds himself pushed along from within, not completely understanding for a time, at least, the implications of his own wishes and behavior. He cannot, therefore, seek the aid of his parents, especially since his parents are often intimately involved in the conflict.

One of the most important hurdles of this kind in the development of the child's personality usually arises when the child is four or five years old. As we have said, the child begins to ask questions concerning sex and the origin of children; he may become curious about what his parents do after he is sent to bed or what they do in their moments of privacy. The little boy may also become jealous of his mother's affection and regard his father as a rival in this respect. He may suspect the mother of granting special privileges to the father which she denies him. In order to satisfy such curiosity and share such privileges, children not infrequently resort to all kinds of subterfuges designed to gain admission to the parents' bed or bedroom. Most of these are unconsciously determined and take the form of such common childhood difficulties as night terrors, in-

somnia, peculiar aches, pains, indigestion, or other ailments that bring the parents to the side of the bed and often lead to the desired permission to spend the remainder of the night in the parents' room.

Admission to the parents' bed may assume a significance for the child which the parents often fail to realize. For him it may be a symbol of being loved, being wanted, and really belonging to the family. Naturally, the greater the insecurity resulting from earlier experiences, the stronger will be the desire for such tangible reassurances. Close to the mother, the boy child feels again the support and protection he enjoyed as a baby, even though he should have long passed that stage of development. Nevertheless, the insecure child attaches great importance to this contact, and it may seem to him that the chief obstacle to the gratification of this desire is the presence of the father whom the mother seems to prefer. If this rival could be removed from the environment, then, according to his way of thinking, the gratification could take place regularly. On such occasions the father becomes, in the eyes of the child, a frustrating agent. This arouses the need for retaliation, and the father becomes the object of aggressive impulses. The child, however, also loves the father who is his protector and who gratifies many of his other needs. The situation may become extremely complicated with all sorts of contradictory emotions and goals playing their parts. We can do no more than touch upon a few of the more common factors which are important for the structure of the personality. We must, of course, confine our description to the general trend since the psychological development of each of us is unique in many respects.

### § *The mechanism of projection.*

In describing early forms of thought it was pointed out that, in common with primitive people, the child tends to think of other objects as similar to himself. In other words, he tends to endow other objects or persons with the same feelings and desires that he himself has toward that object or person. This mechanism we call *projection*. We all use it to some degree throughout life, but since it operates unconsciously, we are usually not aware of it. For example, if you and a friend have had a quarrel that aroused a strong feeling of resentment in you, you probably believe that your friend feels just as much resentment toward you. You unconsciously project your own feelings upon him. The worst of it is, that having projected these feelings, you then behave toward your friend as though he were actually resentful toward you, even though you are no longer aware of your resentment toward him. The same thing happens with jealous people. They continually suspect that the other person is untrue to them. They become suspicious of every word and gesture and are certain the other is unfaithful. It usually turns out, however, that the accused is innocent, whereas the accuser is the one who unconsciously would like to do these things. He or she has projected his own temptations to the other person and now behaves as though the other person actually possessed them.

The boy child frequently makes use of this projection mechanism in trying to resolve the conflict previously described. His relations to his father may at first become strained because he experiences difficulty in loving and hating him at the same time. In early childhood such a contradiction is not particularly disturbing. As we grow older, however, and the concept of self becomes more integrated,

the incompatibility of these two contradictory emotions becomes more unbearable to us. We are almost forced, through inner necessity, to establish some consistency within ourselves. In order to do this the child unconsciously projects his aggressive impulses upon his father. By this projection the problem, in the mind of the child, is reversed. It is no longer he who has aggressive wishes toward the father and wishes his removal, but the father who has the dangerous impulses and desires the child's removal. This reversal, however, now arouses the child's need for safety and fills him with a fear of the father instead of a hate. The little boy, on a conscious level, now loves his father and fears him at the same time.

These two emotions are not as incompatible with each other as the previous conflict between love and hate. To be sure, it is not comfortable for the child to live in a state of continual anxiety and fear that the person he loves is going to injure or punish him. It is demoralizing and hampers his free activity. He is placed in a defensive position that requires caution. In an attempt to find some security under these circumstances, the child tries to restrict behavior which, he believes, will meet with his father's disapproval. His relationship to his mother is foremost, for, from the boy's point of view, his desires for her brought him into the present dangerous situation. The consequences seem to him to be so painful that he scarcely dares to think of them. Most of this process is carried on outside the realm of consciousness. Nevertheless, one can often detect a tendency on the part of the child to withdraw from the family during this period. The child's relations to the parents at this time often become strained and even antagonistic, much to the dismay of those who have none but the kindest thoughts and intentions toward him.

§ *The mechanism of identification.*

Although this relationship to the father may appear unimportant in the eyes of the adult, there can be little question concerning its significance to the young child. For him it contains insurmountable obstacles that threaten his security and well-being. He is in a quandary. The gratifications of some of his needs are jeopardized no matter which way he turns.

Another mechanism, known as *identification*, is frequently used to help him out of these difficulties. By means of identification he unconsciously associates himself with another person; he unconsciously becomes one with that individual. Psychologically speaking, the other person becomes a part of himself, and he begins to feel, think, and act as though he were this other person. Although identification with another person is most common during childhood, we all make use of it to some degree throughout life. When we are at a football game, a prize-fight, a drama, or some other kind of exhibition, or even when we read a novel, we often feel the tensions and emotions that belong to the persons we are observing or reading about, even though we have no physical contact with them. At times these feelings become so intense that they are carried over into action. People weep when the hero or heroine of the play is in sorrow, swing their fists when an uppercut is called for, or lean forward when a great effort on the part of the team is demanded. These are temporary identifications. When the occasion is over, the effects disappear, at least as far as we can observe.

There are also more permanent forms of identification. A high-school boy or girl may suddenly begin to act and talk like his or her favorite movie star. The same hair-dress may be adopted, the same mannerisms, posture, and gait.



To the bystander this may look like a masquerade bordering on the ridiculous. But it is not ridiculous. Frequently these individuals do not consciously realize that they are acting the parts of others. The process has taken place unconsciously and is now reflected in the personality of the individual. When we investigate such an identification, we often find that the individual in question not only acts like the hero but that he also thinks and feels and responds in terms of the ideals he attributes to this person. To all intents and purposes he has become one with that person and is, for the time being, unable to say which part of his psychological make-up belongs to himself and which belongs to the other. Such identifications, too, are usually of a transitory nature. Sometimes they last a week or a month or a year, after which they are dropped and other patterns built up.

The identifications of childhood are more permanent. In order to resolve his conflict, the little boy identifies with his father. By so doing he removes the necessity of fearing his own aggressive impulses which he has unconsciously projected, for now he and his father have joined hands—they are, in a sense, one person. Under these circumstances he feels free to love the real father undisturbed by the aggressive impulse that had previously separated them from each other. The real father is now loved as the great protector and provider upon whom the child may rely. Furthermore, he can love his mother much more freely and whole-heartedly, for, in his own mind, he is, in part, the father and can, therefore, share the father's privileges. The world begins to look brighter to him, for he can now seek the gratifications he had previously been forced to deny himself. Through this identification he finds a new security, and he begins to deal with the world about him in a manner similar to that of his parent. His various needs become integrated in terms of

the father's pattern, or at least in terms of what he conceives the father's pattern to be. The things his father likes are the things that he now likes; the parent's standards of behavior become his standards; he faces the world with a new confidence and assurance. The cultural pattern of his parents becomes his.

Such an identification is never complete, however. We are all individuals with specific needs which, through constitutional differences, differences in training, differences in experiences, and differences in cultural milieu, make each one of us unique. The pattern of one person's needs will never completely fit the needs of another. Furthermore, the father image which the child incorporates into himself by identification is never the real father but the child's immature conception of him. It is an idealized image which surpasses the father in reality. Nevertheless, the boy tries to integrate the expression of his needs to conform with this image, in the belief that if he succeeds in doing so, he too can attain the security, power, and love which he believes his father now enjoys. The father image becomes the boy's ideal self.

#### § *The ego-ideal becomes the guide.*

The result of an early identification of this kind is still to be found in our adult personalities. In every one there is a considerable discrepancy between the ideal self and the person as he actually is. Our behavior seldom measures up to what we think it should be. For purposes of description let us call that part of the personality which carries on the business of everyday living the *ego*. The ego brings about practical solutions of our need tensions in harmony with the reality of our environment; it makes decisions, choices, and acts accordingly. The image of what we would like to be may be called the *ego-ideal*. The ego strives to be like the

ego-ideal, but never actually attains this degree of perfection. What we have done is to "hitch our wagon to a star" which we then feel compelled to reach. Actually most of us never come very close to our "stars," but by trying each generation advances the culture.

"What," we may ask, "happens to the original needs involved in this conflict? The child experienced aggressive impulses directed toward his father. Through fear of consequences he then projected these and behaved as though the impulses were really in his father instead of in himself. The image of his father produced by this projection aroused the child's need for safety. He feared the father and then rid himself of this fear by identifying with him. The child, as he grows older, is no longer aware either of the original aggressive impulses or of the fear he had in consequence of them. They seem to have disappeared as far as any direct expression of them in his behavior is concerned. Some sort of transformation must have taken place, for, according to the theory we have been developing, a need, being a form of energy, cannot be destroyed simply by manipulating it in various ways. It must have found some new avenue of expression or still exist in a latent state. What has become of these needs?"

The transformation and the redirection of the expression of these needs are complicated but extremely interesting. We have seen how, through projection, the individual is able to rid his ego of dangerous, disturbing, or incompatible wishes. By means of this technique his own need is indirectly expressed through another person. There is one difficulty, however. In reversing the persons in whom the need is supposed to be active, the objects toward which it is directed are also reversed. At first it was the child who had the aggressive impulses and the father who was the object of them. Through projection the entire picture is reversed,

and the father has the aggressive impulses and the child is the object of them. It is this complete reversal which aroused the child's fear of his father and then led to an identification with him. The image of the father with which the child identified himself, however, possessed the aggressive impulses that the child had projected on him. The result is that the father image which the child incorporated into his personality as an ego-ideal included his own repressed aggression. The outcome of all this psychological maneuvering is that the aggression the child had originally felt against his father has become redirected and is turned inward against his own ego.

¶ *This redirected aggression is experienced by the individual as conscience.*

When this complicated process is completed, the child is no longer entirely dependent on the approval or disapproval of other people. He carries his own standards within himself in the form of an ego-ideal and becomes the judge of his own actions.

Whenever the ego participates in activities that are at variance with the ego-ideal (or parent image), it experiences feelings of guilt and a sense of unworthiness and remorse. In other words, the child has acquired a *conscience*. As he grows older and experiences this form of punishment more frequently, he learns to fear its action just as he had earlier feared the punishment and disapproval of his father. This parent image becomes the great inner authority which gradually replaces the real parent as the stern judge of his actions. Its function is not unlike that of the referee in a football game who, although he takes no active part in the play itself, is always in the midst of activities and ready to disapprove and penalize any infraction of the rules. The great difference is that in the present case the referee also estab-

lishes the team's objectives, the rules by which the play is to be conducted and the penalties to be inflicted.

By this roundabout route, the primitive aggressive impulses of the child find a substitute outlet of expression. What was originally an unsocial tendency has been unconsciously redirected in such a way that it now acts as the great socializing factor in personality. Alexander Pope, in "The Universal Prayer," writes of this fear of punishment by conscience:

What Conscience dictates to be done,  
Or warns me not to do,  
This, teach me more than hell to shun,  
That, more than heaven pursue.

The fear of one's own aggressive impulse, expressed through conscience, becomes the great repressing force in personality. The larger the amount of aggression which finds expression in this way, the more severe are its punishments, and consequently, the greater the ego's fear of them. In order to safeguard itself from these punishments, the ego strives to repress all need demands that conflict with the ego-ideal. Only by harmonizing its own activities with those of the ego-ideal, can the ego find inner peace and security. One of the ego's chief concerns in the future is to prevent wishes incompatible with the ego-ideal from reaching consciousness. When that happens, the ego is exposed to punishment in the form of a "bad" conscience.

¶ *The super-ego becomes the great internal authority.*

But repression, as we have seen, is an unconscious process. We must suppose, therefore, that in order to carry through the repression without involving consciousness, both the ego and conscience must be partly unconscious. For descrip-

tive purposes let us incorporate the punitive or punishing function, whether conscious or unconscious, in a new concept which we may call the *super-ego*. For convenience we can retain the term *conscience* to describe the conscious part of the super-ego. It is, then, the super-ego that makes the demands on the ego, which are experienced as *duties* or *obligations*, and punishes the ego when it fails to live up to its standards. In addition the super-ego has an unconscious part intimately involved in repressing those wishes or forms of expression that are flagrant violations of its code and would disturb the equilibrium of the ego if it were permitted an awareness of them. Among the need demands to be repressed are those which originally involved the child in the conflict that resulted in the formation of the super-ego itself.

The super-ego is, therefore, the internal representative of the parents, as we regarded them in childhood, and we react to both with the same emotional patterns. There are some differences, however, between the punishments inflicted by these two socializing agencies. The real parents only punished overt forms of expression that were contrary to their standards. Phantasies and undetected transgressions went unpunished. Not so with the super-ego. The super-ego punishes the ego for entertaining forbidden phantasies and wishes as well as for the needs that are expressed. Then, too, the super-ego penalty is not the same as the one the real parent would have inflicted had he discovered the transgression in question. Punishment by the super-ego is the one the child, in his immaturity, had imagined he would receive if he were caught. Owing to the child's tendency to exaggerate parental sternness, severity, and expectations, the super-ego punishment is usually more severe than the real punishment would have been. Since the super-ego is always on the job, we can never rid ourselves of its judgments. Every action,

thought, or wish is subjected to its approval or disapproval. A large number of our repressed retaliatory impulses finds expression in its condemnations and punishments. We live in constant fear of it and try to avoid its disapproval and win its approval to the ego-ideal, and therefore to our cultural pattern. The super-ego makes real social beings out of us.

This desirable outcome, however, is not achieved in a short time. The conflicts that lead to the formation of the super-ego may be spread over a period of years before they are resolved in some such manner as described. Even then the child's difficulties are not at an end. It takes considerable time and experience before adequate substitute forms of expression and gratification can be found for the need demands that conflict with the super-ego standards. Much of this must be done by the trial-and-error method of learning. The child must experiment. He must try a great many different forms of behavior in order to discover those which provide suitable gratification to the underlying needs and yet do not violate the mandates of the super-ego. Each success in this direction strengthens the integration of the ego and enables it to cope more adequately with the demands of the needs, the environment, and the super-ego. A large part of this integration is carried on during the years between the time of the resolution of these early conflicts at about the age of four or five years and the onset of puberty at from ten to thirteen years of age.

§ *The transition from the home to the school reflects the child's earlier training and adjustment.*

New adjustments, however, must also be made during the five to seven years preceding puberty. The child must make the transition from the small intimate home environment to the larger, impersonal one represented by the school and

the neighborhood. For some children this transition is easy, but for others it is extremely difficult. The way in which the child reacts to this new and expanded environment depends largely upon his adjustment in the home. If his early training has been such that he has been able to achieve a fair degree of mastery over his need tensions; if his conflicts in the home have not been too intense, and were adequately resolved, the step to the larger social environment is relatively easy. On the other hand, if the child regards the home primarily as a place in which frustrations are administered and disturbing tensions are developed, without adequate gratifications, he will probably regard the school in the same light and rebel against it. The transition then is a difficult one.

In the course of growing-up, we tend to face all new situations with the emotional patterns that were aroused in similar situations in the past. Consequently, if the child was happy and secure at home, he will carry these attitudes into the school. To the teacher, whose position in the school-room is similar to that which the mother occupies in the home, he will respond with the same emotional pattern. If he harbors antagonisms toward his mother, he will in all probability respond to his first teacher with hostility. This carry-over from the home to the school is particularly evident in cases where the child is not permitted to express his resentment at home—where there is a heavy taboo on aggressive behavior. The child may seize the opportunity to use the teacher as a mother substitute against whom his inhibited aggression may be expressed without the same punishment he receives at home. In the same way the adjustments that he makes to the other children in the school-room will be largely determined by the adjustments which he has been able to achieve with his brothers and sisters.



The first days in school are, therefore, an indication of the adequacy of the child's earlier adjustments.

The school represents a stepping-stone from the home environment of the child to the society-at-large of the adult. It becomes the duty of the school, therefore, to help prepare the individual to meet the more extensive demands of the larger environment in an effective and fruitful manner. It must also help the child to build up an effective internal authority suitable to a changing environment; supply him with a fund of knowledge about the external world in which his needs are to be gratified; provide him with a large variety of activities that can serve as substitute outlets; and equip him with skills that will make it possible for him to use these substitute outlets for restricted needs to the fullest extent. By such means the school can help in strengthening the child's ego and prepare it for the demands of adult life in our society.

§ *New adjustments are required when the child reaches puberty.*

A large part of this training must be carried out before the child encounters another hurdle in his psychological development. This new development is the need for sex which reappears at the time of puberty. As we have seen in the last chapter, there is, in civilized man, early sexual development that leads him into emotional conflicts with the family. With the resolution of these conflicts, the sex need usually disappears as a powerful motive and remains in a rather dormant condition until puberty.

Because of physiological changes at the time of puberty, the sex need becomes greatly intensified. As the need tension increases, it exerts a greater pressure on the ego and demands recognition and gratification. The earlier forms of

release and gratification, together with the phantasies that led him into conflict, are reawakened. All of these, however, are at variance with the ego-ideal standards and must be barred from consciousness in order to avoid super-ego punishment. The ego, therefore, regards this added tension as dangerous and threatening to its integrity and safety. It reacts to this danger with ill-defined feelings of anxiety. Very often it is necessary for the young person to withdraw much of his energy from the affairs of the outer world in order to combat these inner demands more effectively. When this happens, he appears to have lost all interest in the world about him. In school the quality of his work may fall to new low levels. He may spend considerable time in day-dreaming and appear to be more or less insulated and protected from his environment. Parents and teachers are often at a loss to understand this sudden change from an alert and interested student to one who seems bored and unreachable. Such a change is usually of a temporary nature. As soon as the individual has found a solution to these new inner conflicts, his energies are again freed for outside activities.

The adolescent's attitude at home may also undergo changes. A loving, congenial, and coöperative child may suddenly become resentful, irritable, and sullen. He may withdraw from the family circle and become secretive and solitary in his actions. Such a change in behavior patterns alarms many parents who feel that their child no longer loves them. Failing to understand that the adolescent is wrestling with internal problems, they insist on a show of affection and demand that he participate in the family activities. In the process they intensify their child's problems. The adolescent's resentment and antagonism toward his parents are primarily attempts to separate himself from, and guard himself against, the reawakening of infantile conflicts

and their attendant desires. Wise parents will take these factors into account and show, through an understanding and tolerant attitude, that they appreciate the adolescent's difficulties and that he can count upon their love and support in meeting them.

The feelings of anxiety that develop, together with feelings of insecurity, may, at times, be almost more than the adolescent can bear. He attempts to focalize and project some of this anxiety upon external objects or conditions with which he can deal on a more realistic basis. The result is that superstitions and fears play a very important rôle. These are symbolic forms of expression that disappear when the underlying conflicts are resolved. To the ego of the adolescent it may seem that if the repressions give way, it will be the end of everything.

It is only natural that the adolescent gropes for the release of such tensions. Since no other outlets are available, the individual quite often seeks gratification by masturbation. This form of expression, however, is often not in keeping with the ego-ideal standards and calls for super-ego punishment. The result is that the individual is filled with guilt and remorse. He condemns himself for his weakness, feels inferior and incompetent for his inability to restrain his actions. Yet the more he struggles against the temptation, the stronger the desire seems to become.

He may believe that the practice will do him some irreparable injury—that he will “lose his manhood,” become “weak-minded” or even insane. There is no scientific evidence to indicate that masturbation, if carried on in moderation, is, in any way, injurious to the individual. Masturbation is a step in normal development and is usually given up as soon as a more adequate form of adjustment is found. Here, again, the early training in the control of need energies and their disposition into other channels will play an

important rôle in determining how the adolescent will meet the need tensions arising from his progressive maturation.

¶ *The road to further adjustments is not always a direct one.*

In general, adolescence is the period during which feelings of inferiority, guilt, insecurity, and anxiety reach their peak. The personality structure of the individual is basically affected by the increased demands of the sex need. A new distribution of forces is called for which will take it into account. While this process of redistribution is going on, the adolescent is more or less disorganized. At times he may seem a stranger even to himself. New behavior patterns, feelings, or attitudes may appear as if by magic. These, too, tend to confuse him. He hardly knows what to expect of himself. His self-assurance is gone, temporarily, and he may seek refuge in isolating himself from others.

The solution, however, does not lie in isolation. If the adolescent is to work out his problems on a social basis, he must find new outlets for his needs within the social environment and not apart from it. One common way is to form new and stronger affiliations with one's own sex. As the adolescent withdraws from family life in order to avoid the arousal of old conflicts and desires, the need for affiliation is forced into new channels. He joins gangs, clubs, and social organizations of one kind or another. Often these are secret societies with initiation rites that serve to bind the adolescents more strongly together. Through such groups the adolescent gains a new feeling of security. Although his guilt may make him feel that he no longer "belongs" at home, here he is accepted as an equal—the sharer of a deep secret. Often the organizations set high ideals by which the members are expected to live. This helps to reinforce the

super-ego of the individual members, and to socialize them to some degree. The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are good illustrations of this type of organization. To such institutions the adolescent swears everlasting allegiance and delights in wearing the uniforms, buttons, or insignia that proclaim to the world that he or she "belongs." These affiliations are of great importance in developing the feeling of security and worthiness necessary for the broader social adjustments that will later be required of him.

Many parents, however, become alarmed when they observe the strong attachments their children make, during this period, to members of their own sex. This is particularly true of girls who pass through a stage of "crushes" on playmates and teachers. Some parents become jealous of the affection lavished on these persons; others fear it is a manifestation of homosexuality which will be difficult to break. In most cases such a concern is not warranted. This, too, is a temporary phase of normal development. Because of his feelings of guilt and anxiety, arising from repressed phantasies, the adolescent is, at first, only able to find an outlet for his need to love with persons most like himself and most distantly removed from those involved in the original conflict. Only as he gains security through a reintegration of personality forces is he gradually able to make the required step to heterosexual relationships without coming into conflict with his super-ego.

In the reintegration of personality forces some of the needs take on a new and greater significance. Among these the need for autonomy is, perhaps, the most noticeable. The adolescent strives to break the childhood bonds that tie him to his family and to assert himself as an independent being. He may, for example, become very careless in his appearance. This can be very irritating to the adults who have to

live and look at him, but it is the adolescent's way of asserting his independence. These minor infringements of cultural patterns become symbols of a deeper desire to break the intangible emotional ties of his childhood. Failing to understand the purposes underlying such behavior, parents often become upset and nag the child in the hope that he will improve his appearance. Such an attitude frequently only serves to heighten the adolescent's antagonism. It, therefore, does more harm than good. Adults can help much more by being tolerant of his behavior and trying to understand the motive behind it. As soon as a more effective method of asserting his independence is found, the adolescent relinquishes this kind of behavior and often goes to the other extreme of observing scrupulous cleanliness in his personal appearance.

The needs for achievement and dominance also assert themselves during this period. Here, too, the adolescent may experience difficulty in finding adequate forms of gratification. Our culture tends to demand more and more training before the individual is permitted to take his place as a productive worker in society. The expression of these needs must, therefore, also be curtailed for a time. Where the opportunities for gratification are meager, adolescents are often forced to find vicarious gratification for these needs in day-dreams. Here they can imagine themselves in high positions, achieving great things. Such day-dreams do no harm. Only when the individual begins to lose touch with reality is there cause for concern. If the adolescent prefers his day-dreams to real achievements, it indicates that the individual lacks the courage to face the world as it is and prefers to remain in a phantasy world of his own. In such a case the necessary reintegration of needs has not been successfully accomplished.

### § *The adolescent and his culture.*

At adolescence we see most clearly the impact of the culture on the developing individual. The adolescent usually flounders for a time in his attempt to find his niche in the culture. This is often extremely difficult. We are living in a rapidly changing world. The ideals upon which we based our childhood adjustments are often no longer the ideals by which we are expected to live as adults. Our social structure is becoming ever more complex and fluid. Living and working conditions change rapidly, and more and more education and training are being required. The moral code today is different from what it was when we were tiny children. The outlook on life is shifting as well as our value system. The result is that the individual finds very little stability in our culture while making his readjustments. Need energies are rapidly approaching their peak, but there is little opportunity to express them. The adolescent in our culture is overwhelmed with energies for which inadequate outlets are provided. Little wonder that many are perplexed.

There is considerable evidence to indicate that children who have been given a sense of security and alternative channels for expressing their needs do not have very much difficulty in adolescence. Their development is smooth and uninterrupted. They pass from childhood into maturity with the same wholesome attitudes they developed earlier and manage to live happy and useful lives, oftentimes in the face of very adverse circumstances. They are the socially adapted individuals who are able to recognize that even though the culture restricts some of their need expressions, it also gives them freedom from the incessant demands of other needs. They appreciate the positive as well as the negative side of cultural patterning. With this attitude they are able to

adapt themselves to the demands of the culture with a minimum of friction and resentment.

Many individuals in our culture are not so fortunate. Adolescence, for them, is still a difficult hurdle in the process of growing up. For them it is a period whose chief characteristics are frustrations, struggles, antagonisms, conflicts, and feelings of anxiety, incompetency, insecurity, unworthiness, and guilt. Many are forced to muddle through the period as best they can without the sympathy and support of their parents, which would greatly facilitate their process of adjustment.

¶ *New identifications take place during adolescence.*

One common way of resolving these difficulties and attaining a more suitable reintegration of personality forces is through new identifications. These identifications, however, are usually not with members of the household. The immediate family is too closely associated with the conflicts of early childhood to serve in this capacity a second time. Too many guilts and antagonisms stand in the way. The adolescent, therefore, usually goes outside the home to find a new model. Frequently teachers are used for this purpose. Sad to say, our schools have been more concerned with the academic achievements of teachers than with the possibility of their serving as models for their pupils. This is unfortunate since the teacher can easily be used, unconsciously, as a parent substitute. Everything else being equal, a teacher would, probably, be the adolescent's first choice as a worthy person with whom to identify. If the characters of his teachers are such that the adolescent prefers not to identify with them, he will seek other persons as models.

Sometimes his search carries him out of his immediate environment to characters in fiction, movie stars, or persons he



scarcely knows and with whom he has no direct contact. Such identifications do no harm although it seems that, in general, real people make the best models. We can see them living in our own world. We can talk over our problems with them and discover their deeper attitudes and reactions.

Although we are prone to blame the individual for his difficulties in making an adjustment, the fault does not rest entirely on his shoulders. A large part of the blame should be shifted to the demands of our culture and the training methods we use in coercing the individual to conform to its patterns. If we are to help future generations to a better adjustment, we must conduct more research in order to discover ways and means of equipping our children more effectively. At present it seems that early training in the control of needs is all important. Many parents and educators tend to rush the psychological development of the child before he is physiologically ready. In an attempt to attain false standards we try to teach by force and threats rather than by love and understanding. These childhood experiences have a profound influence upon adolescent adjustment. In general, we may say that the more adequate the resolution of the individual's early conflicts, the easier it will be for him to make a satisfactory readjustment during adolescence.

# 10

## ANXIETY, INSECURITY, INFERIORITY, AND GUILT

MANY people in our culture suffer acutely from feelings of anxiety, insecurity, inferiority, and guilt. Generally, these feelings are at their height during adolescence, but they are by no means confined to that period. For example, let us suppose that an individual has been offered a promotion. Even though he would like the new job very much, he is reluctant to accept it because he is skeptical about his ability to make good at this type of work. He considers the proposition very carefully, but finally decides that it is beyond his capacities and rejects the offer. His boss, however, declines his refusal. He calls the individual to his office and tells him he is too modest and that he can certainly handle the new job. The employee is elated over the confidence his boss has in his abilities. He changes his mind and accepts the new position. In spite of his best efforts, however, it soon becomes obvious that he is failing. Under these circumstances the individual will probably experience feelings of inferiority. He has failed to live up to the expectations of his boss. We can all understand this feeling. Most of us would feel as he does if we were in his place. Wrong as he is about his real abilities, he cannot do the job if he thinks he cannot.

Then, too, we can understand the anxiety experienced by a person in a position of imminent danger, let us say during

an earthquake. In fact, when an individual fails to show anxiety in such a situation, we think there is something wrong with him. We take it for granted that a person will feel anxious when he is in an earthquake zone and the earth begins to tremble. There is real danger that may materialize at any moment and bring disaster, and an anxiety reaction is, therefore, appropriate. It prepares the individual for an emergency, and he is alert to the danger.

§ *We sometimes experience feelings of anxiety when nothing in the external world warrants their appearance.*

Some persons, however, experience anxiety or inferiority when there is nothing apparent in the situation to justify these feelings. They may feel inferior even though they have accomplished things of which most people would feel very proud. They may feel intensely insecure in their jobs, their home life, or their social circle although others can detect nothing that warrants such a feeling. Or they may feel very anxious in an environment in which most people are unable to sense any danger. In other words, these people seem to have a hypersensitivity to one or more of these feelings.

How are we to account for such reactions? Since there is nothing in the external environment to explain adequately why these people react in one way while most of us react in another, we must look for the reason within the individuals themselves.

Let us begin with particularly common feelings of anxiety. An individual may be reading a pleasant novel at home, visiting with a group of people, or walking in the country, when he suddenly feels anxious. He cannot understand this reaction because there seems to be nothing to fear. His reason tells him it is all nonsense, but something, nevertheless, insists on keeping him in a state of anxiety. Another

person may feel anxious because she is afraid she has failed to lock the door of her home or to turn off the electric iron. She always does lock the door, and she always detaches the iron, but unwarranted feelings of uncertainty overtake her.

In most people such manifestations are transitory. The feeling may persist for a time and then disappear just as mysteriously as it appeared. In other persons, however, it becomes more or less permanent. The individual's efforts to explain it or get rid of it prove fruitless. The feeling becomes the individual's chief concern. His rational processes become distorted, his digestive system upset, and his sleep disturbed. The constant state of fear demoralizes him. He feels a kind of *free-floating anxiety*.

Under intense emotion the endocrine glands of the human being automatically release adrenalin into the blood as a natural means of preparing the organism for prolonged and arduous exertion. A somewhat similar state to free-floating anxiety may be experimentally produced by injecting adrenalin into the blood-stream. When introduced artificially, adrenalin causes the experimental subject to experience an emotion that has no rational content or idea to go with it. This condition is called a *cold emotion*. In this state the subject may act very strangely. If some one drops something, or slams the door, the subject jumps as though struck by a bomb. An intense fear reaction follows. The fact that the reaction is disproportionate to the cause does not concern him at the moment. He has found an outlet for the inner tension.

Persons who have considerable free-floating anxiety also react in this way. They do their best to find some object, person, or situation in the outer world upon which they can fasten and focalize their fear. All sorts of things may be used for this purpose. They may become afraid of mice or snakes, closed-in spaces or open spaces, high places or low places,

cats, dogs, horses, stairs, elevators, street-cars, trains. or what not. Thus, the diffuse state of anxiety is channeled and made more tolerable. The person can now do something about it—he can avoid the feared object or situation and thereby regain some of his inner security.

¶ *The danger to which the individual is reacting is within himself.*

What is the danger to which the individual is reacting? It certainly does not belong in the outer world although the experiencing individual does his best to put it there. Why should a few people experience great fear when they see a small dog at a distance when millions of others do not? On the contrary, hundreds of thousands of families keep dogs as pets and regard them as their most faithful friends. They draw security from the very thing which the other person fears.

Then where does the fear originate? Clearly the reaction does not take place on a conscious, rational level. Anybody who has tried to argue a person out of an unintelligible fear knows how fruitless such efforts are. The reaction is beyond all conscious control, and we must assume that it is due to unconscious processes. These, as we have seen earlier in our study, are largely concerned with primitive forms of need gratification that were in conflict with the demands of the culture and the super-ego and were, in the course of development, repressed. The ego now disowns them as a part of itself and denies them conscious recognition. They are not dead, however. They beat against the walls of the ego like the ocean beating against dikes—always looking for weak spots in the barriers through which to enter the guarded territory.

The maintenance of repressions becomes more and more important as the personality becomes integrated. The ego builds up all kinds of defenses against these primitive need

demands which it regards as dangerous to its welfare. When the defenses are strong, in comparison with the intensity of the repressed desires, the ego has the situation well in hand, and the individual experiences no free-floating anxiety. If the intensity of a repressed desire is increased, however, to a point at which it threatens to become as strong or stronger than the repressing forces, the ego views the situation as one of imminent danger. For example, the ego may have its repressions well in hand when a situation arises in the external world that could be utilized in the gratification of a repressed desire. Under these circumstances, as we have seen, the underlying need has greater claims for conscious recognition and gratification than it previously had. The case is analogous to the example given in connection with the need for food. You were unaware of the existence of the need until you passed the food shop and saw desirable food objects in the window. The need for food, then, predominated your thinking. And so it is in the present case, except that the particular object or situation that could gratify the need is tabooed and repressed. Nevertheless, it does have claims for priority in consciousness under these circumstances and brings added pressure on the ego. The ego experiences greater difficulty in denying its existence and musters all its available forces. The anxiety reaction is the signal of this danger. Since the ego refuses to acknowledge the existence of this desire, however, it cannot react to it specifically. It can only react with diffuse anxiety that has no conscious content or object. It is on the alert against any emergency coming from any quarter.

Many people experience a reaction of this sort when they read a mystery story or horror tale. It seems that one of the great attractions of stories of this type is that they provide a form of vicarious gratification to repressed wishes and phantasies. While reading them or seeing them in the

movies, the individual can unconsciously identify himself with the characters and, to some extent, live out, through them, his own forbidden desires. It often happens, however, that mystery stories go too far. They become so vivid that the reader is on the verge of accepting them as his own. He then becomes disturbed and experiences feelings of anxiety. The reaction may be so intense that he has difficulty in controlling himself. He tells himself that he is foolish to feel this way, that there is no cause for alarm since it is really only a story, that it has nothing to do with the present situation, and that it is absurd to be apprehensive. Nevertheless, it may take considerable time for the individual to regain his equilibrium and convince himself that the danger was not a real one. Even then the theme sometimes returns to consciousness in the form of a nightmare or an anxiety dream.

Other people need even less stimulation to reawaken repressed desires or phantasies. In the course of their everyday lives situations arise which cause this danger signal to be given. Frequently the incident that brought it about appears to be extremely insignificant. It may be so trivial, in fact, that consciously the individual attaches no importance to it. It may be no more than a glance from a person who happened to resemble somebody in his past. It might be a word spoken in a peculiar tone of voice, an unusual mannerism, a story in the newspaper, the title of a book, or what not. Often the individual is unable to tell which of the many impressions caused the anxiety reaction to appear. He is, therefore, at a complete loss to understand its presence or the purpose it is designed to serve.

We may well ask why the ego is so terrified of these repressed wishes. Why must it keep them hidden, like skeletons in a closet, as though its very life were in danger? Weren't these desires normal and natural for an immature

child? Don't most children experience similar feelings during this phase of their development? Why, then, must the ego of each individual regard them in this unholy and unnatural light? Why not accept them for what they are and laugh at the follies of our childhood?

The secret lies in the relation existing between the ego and the super-ego. The super-ego, as we have seen, is usually based on an exaggerated image of the parents. The individual has incorporated this image within himself or herself and endowed it with the same emotions he or she felt toward the parents. On the one hand, they were loving protectors and guides, while on the other hand they were ogres who meted out punishment for transgressions. The safest course, it seemed at the time, was to put implicit faith in parents as trustworthy guides in order to avoid displeasure and punishments. From this time on, the ego of the child behaves toward its super-ego as though it were the parents it had imagined and dreaded. The super-ego faithfully plays the parents' rôle. When the ego permits the individual to indulge in activities contrary to the edicts of the super-ego, the super-ego "lashes" the ego for its misbehavior. Even when the ego only entertains thoughts or wishes of misbehaving, the super-ego inflicts its punishment. It is this punishment which terrorizes the ego when forbidden thoughts or wishes strive too strongly for conscious recognition. The ego behaves toward the super-ego as though it were still the unruly child exposed to an avenging parent.

We never completely outgrow this relationship. Buried in the unconscious, it remains in its original form quite impervious to changing conditions in ourselves and the external world. The ego continues to regard the wishes it repressed as a child as just as dangerous as they seemed to him at that time and expects the same merciless punishment. Little wonder that it avoids all commerce with these re-



pressed desires. Less wonder that it reacts with feelings of anxiety when they threaten to break through its defenses, and the ego is forced to acknowledge them as a part of itself.

§ *We do our best to link these feelings of anxiety to objects or situations in the external world.*

The dangers we feared during early childhood were all in the external world. At that time the world seemed to be filled with strange and uncertain forces against which we were helpless. As adults we still tend to expect all great dangers to come from that quarter. The result is that when free-floating anxiety arises from inner dangers, we try to connect these feelings to some object or situation in the external world. The mechanism by which this shift is accomplished is known as *displacement*. Such a displacement has several advantages. First, the object or situation in the external world becomes a "straw man" which tends to throw us off the track in trying to discover the source of the feelings. Second, the diffuse feelings of anxiety can be focalized into a reaction with a definite content. And third, the ego is able to react to this external situation in an appropriate manner, namely, by avoiding or withdrawing from it.

§ *Feelings of insecurity are extremely demoralizing.*

There are occasions in the lives of all of us when we experience feelings of insecurity. They often persist over long periods and frequently seem to be independent of external circumstances. The lines of demarcation between feelings of insecurity and feelings of anxiety is not sharply defined. The latter are, perhaps, more focalized and transitory than the former and consequently lend themselves more easily to sudden attacks which temporarily upset the individual and

necessitate counter-measures of defense. Nevertheless, the effects produced by feelings of insecurity are no less demoralizing. The constant undertone of fear is not conducive to concerted efforts in any direction. A large part of the individual's attention is always devoted to his supports rather than being concentrated upon the attainment of desired goals. He acts as though every goal were surrounded by a sheet of thin ice which he must cross before he can reach it. In the process of trying, he becomes more absorbed in the safety of each step than in the goal he set out to attain. The result is that he is severely handicapped in reaching his objectives.

We can, perhaps, gain some insight into the origins of these persistent feelings of insecurity by examining an external situation which frequently arouses temporary feelings of this kind. Suppose, for example, that an individual is invited to attend a party given by persons whom he considers to be socially superior to himself. The customs of this group are strange to him, but for one reason or another he wishes to make a good impression and to be accepted by them. He endeavors, therefore, to behave in accordance with their patterns. The result is that he studies the ways the others act and strives to imitate them to the best of his ability. He may succeed fairly well, but underneath there is always a lurking fear that he will make a mistake which will reveal his real tendencies and lead to his rejection. He feels insecure in this environment. This situation is a very common theme in motion pictures and fiction, and most of us enjoy the discomfiture of the individual who finds himself in such circumstances. Most of us have, at some time or other, found ourselves in a similar situation and can, therefore, understand and appreciate the feelings of insecurity that may be aroused.

Feelings of inner insecurity have a somewhat similar

origin. The difference lies chiefly in the fact that in this case the ego of the individual seeks acceptance from the super-ego instead of from an outside person or group which it considers to be superior. Diffuse feelings of insecurity arise whenever the ego fears that its conduct or achievements will not measure up to the expectations of the super-ego, and that it will, therefore, not be loved and accepted by it. This love, which the ego seeks, has origins similar to those of the super-ego aggression. Through identification with the parents' image a certain amount of the individual's love for them becomes internalized, redirected toward himself. In the course of further experience, he becomes, in part, dependent upon the love and support of the super-ego, just as he learns to fear its punishments. Both aspects reflect the early attitude of the child to the image of the parents he, himself, had created.

If the parents, in the eyes of the child, were inconsistent in their demands and unpredictable in giving love and support, these characteristics will be included in the super-ego. The individual will, in the future, be uncertain of the consequences of his behavior in terms of super-ego approval or disapproval, just as in childhood he could never be sure whether a specific form of behavior would result in love or withdrawal on the part of his parents. In order to safeguard himself against such a possible loss of love he must move cautiously and carefully and examine the consequences that may result from each step before he takes it. Just as the man on thin ice must test its strength by degrees before he trusts his full weight to it, so this kind of individual must probe his way and be ready to retreat at the first indication of disapproval from the super-ego.

Feelings of insecurity, like those of anxiety, are consciously experienced by the individual although their origins remain unknown. The individual has no awareness of

why he feels as he does, and his efforts to rid himself of these feelings meet with little success. The tendency, under these circumstances, is always to fasten the feelings to some situation in the outer world which might, conceivably, be responsible for them. The individual may, then, become uncertain about his job, uneasy about the stability of his home, doubtful about his acceptance in a particular social group, and so forth. Almost any situation will do. The important fact is that these external situations do, by this process, assume an exaggerated importance to which the individual then reacts. Owing to unconscious processes he has distorted his picture of reality. He has really made a mountain out of a mole hill.

It is almost impossible to combat by intellectual methods such a displacement of feeling. From an objective point of view we can be sure that the individual is grossly exaggerating the dangers of the external situation to which he attributes his feelings, but it is of little help to argue the matter with him. He may gain momentary relief through our encouragement, but as soon as we stop assuring him, he believes we have not understood the situation correctly and returns to his former views. He is almost forced to do this. Feelings of this kind without some obvious reason for them are almost intolerable. As long as the person can attach them to circumstances in the outer world, he can relieve the inner tension through actions designed to remedy the situation. He also avoids looking at the cause which really lies within himself by finding an acceptable outer reason for feeling as he does. The unfortunate part of it is that in reacting to this magnification as though it were real, he frequently makes the external situation worse than it was before. This often leads to a real rejection by other people where there was only an imagined one before. The person may become oversensitive and thus a sort of nuisance socially.

§ *Feelings of inferiority.*

Closely allied to feelings of anxiety and insecurity are feelings of inferiority. As we pointed out at the beginning of the chapter, such a feeling is justified in some situations. On the other hand, there are exceedingly capable people who may be doing a marvelous job—far better than any one expects them to do—who still feel that they are inferior. The feeling that they are failures, or are about to fail in whatever they are doing, seems to haunt them wherever they go. In everyday language, we say that such people have an “inferiority complex.”

Whose expectations are these people falling short of? The standard by which they measure their achievements must be a highly personal one, quite different from that of other people. This personal standard, as we have seen, is the ego-ideal which sets the goals of our future conduct. In some persons the ego-ideal is high and leads the individual to great achievements which are of value to the culture as well as to himself. But sometimes the demands of the ego-ideal become excessive and the individual is left with feelings of inferiority.

Many a parent, for example, expects high achievement from his child, and sometimes the child's ego-ideal, based on the inflated image of a demanding parent, may develop into a slave-driver. His success in the adult world may be outstanding in all but his own eyes. However, his ego-ideal will goad him on, marring the satisfaction he might have derived from his attainments.

§ *An exaggerated ego-ideal may be detrimental to the individual.*

Another individual brought up under similar circumstances may, as an adult, find the demands of the ego-ideal so far

beyond his reach that he gives up trying. He indulges in "sour-grape" reactions in which he feels that the goal is so far off and so difficult to attain that he doesn't want it anyway. Such an individual loses interest in achievements and seeks pity instead of love.

Severe feelings of inferiority may also be found in the person who was overprotected in childhood, or who was never given an opportunity to do things for himself. Whenever he wanted to try something, his parents, nurse, or teacher did the things for him, or if he did make an attempt, the adult would do the same thing much better. The child's accomplishments were, in this way, always made to appear inferior to those of others. Under these circumstances, adults assume tremendous power in the eyes of a child, and naturally this contributes to an exaggerated ego-ideal. Whatever the child does afterwards is judged by this false standard, and all achievements appear inferior and defective by comparison. The feeling of inferiority, incompetency, inadequacy, or whatever we wish to call it, may arise before he even starts a new task, and like other inappropriate emotions it then interferes with his performance. The result is that his achievement is much poorer than it would have been if these unwarranted feelings had not intervened.

Every teacher has seen pupils in whom this reaction was evident. Under ordinary circumstances a child may be a fairly good student, but as soon as an examination or quiz is mentioned, he becomes flustered and excited. He is sure that it will be too hard for him and that he will fail. Often he does, not because he does not know or understand the material covered, but because he has set too high an ideal for himself, and unconsciously fears the consequences of not attaining it. Each failure of this sort only serves to aggravate the feelings of inferiority, and each new test calls out a stronger emotional reaction which in turn increases the pos-

sibilities of failure. And so these individuals are caught in a vicious circle.

Inferiority feelings of this kind arising out of the unconscious and with no rational content are disturbing in other ways. In trying to improve relations between the ego and ego-ideal and rid himself of these disturbing feelings, the individual tries to find excuses in the outer world. If he has failed to live up to expectations, he will probably try to shift the blame on something else. When he took the critical examinations, the room was too hot or too cold; the air was stuffy; he hadn't slept well the night before; his fountain pen wasn't working well; or some excuse of this sort. Often he blames the teacher for being "prejudiced against him." Any minor factor in the outer world may be used as an excuse for his failure. Having found a scapegoat, the individual feels better. It is not he who is to blame, but the outer world which is always putting in his path obstacles that prevent him from making his best showing. In this way he is able to maintain his own integrity to some degree, and avoids facing the feelings of inferiority that arise out of unconscious sources by displacing them on some incidental detail.

Sometimes these feelings are displaced upon social relationships. The individual doesn't feel that he is able to cope with the demands which a group or another individual may make upon him. He becomes fearful that his (often imagined) shortcomings will be detected and that he will be exposed to ridicule. In order to avoid such a situation he withdraws into his own shell where he lives in a phantasy world. Here he is able in his imaginings to perform great feats and be the envy of all. He can convince himself that he could really do all these things if he only tried. But he seldom gets to the point of actually trying. As soon as he emerges from his private domain into the world at large, these inappropriate emotions arise and get in his way. What

he could easily accomplish if he had confidence in his own ability he now finds extremely difficult, if not impossible. He is filled with doubts and misgivings. He becomes clumsy and awkward in his movements, and unless he receives encouragement and support from others, he will be inclined to deny the value of the goal in order to retreat more gracefully. Shakespeare puts this extremely well when he says in *Measure for Measure*:

Our doubts are traitors  
And make us lose the good we oft might win  
By fearing to attempt.

Feelings of inferiority may also be displaced upon some minor aspect of the individual's own body. In such a case he does not forsake the goal, whether it be a social or a love relationship, but feels that his appearance is such that it would be impossible for him to attain it. Almost any part of the body may be the object of such a displacement. The individual may feel that his mouth is too large or too small; that his ears are unsightly; that his nose is crooked, too long, too broad, or too stubby; that he is too tall or too short, too fat or too thin; that he is knock-kneed, bow-legged, has unattractive teeth, acne, or what not. Normal adult individuals know how trivial such physical attributes are in warm human relationships. What we are really interested in is the inner person and not the details of his appearance. But it is very difficult to convince a person who has displaced such feelings upon one of these physical details to accept this fact. To him such a detail seems all important, and he believes that everybody else in the world must share his view.

The results of such a displacement of feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and inferiority arising out of the unconscious relationship between the ego and the super-ego may be devastating to the usefulness and happiness of the individual. Hemmed in on all sides by unreal dangers, which are



remnants of his early childhood, the adult personality is crippled in its attempts to deal with the world in an advantageous manner. Strong emotional reactions, which were appropriate to his immature conception of a similar external situation in childhood, now intrude upon his mature logical thought processes. Through the interaction of conflicting psychic forces his view of reality is distorted. Minor uncertainties in the external world are magnified into major calamities. Many of them would evaporate if the individual had the courage to tackle them. Beset by inner fears, however, these individuals can seldom muster the courage to try. Left to themselves, they usually prefer to withdraw from situations they consider dangerous and limit their activities to, what seem to them, safer goals. Threatening shadows from childhood have followed them into adulthood and continue to hinder a wholesome adjustment to reality.

¶ *Feelings of guilt or remorse are usually experienced after the individual has committed an un-social deed.*

Other feelings are also aroused through conflicting demands of different sides of the personality. These are feelings of guilt, self-condemnation, or remorse. These feelings usually result from unsocial transactions in the outer world. Then they are socially useful since they deter us from repeating the same conduct in the future. Let us suppose that one of your friends trusts you with a large sum of money. The control of this money is entirely in your hands. All you were asked to do was to keep an account of your transactions. In the course of these transactions you find that your own funds are very low, in fact so low that you cannot meet your current expenses. You are tempted to divert some of your friend's money to meet your needs, but you refrain from doing so for fear that he will discover the shortage when the

final accounting takes place. Nevertheless, the temptation is great, and you are torn between keeping faith with your friend and taking care of your own current requirements.

While in your state of indecision, you suddenly discover that you could easily list the amount of money you need under one of the items of expense without arousing suspicion. You yield to the temptation and cover the shortage in the accounts. When the final accounting takes place, your friend scarcely looks at the items listed and questions none of them. Instead he thanks you for your kindness and trouble and praises you for your careful handling of his funds. Under these circumstances you will experience severe feelings of guilt and suffer from a "bad conscience." You have broken one of the rules of our society, violated your own principles, and betrayed the faith another person had in your integrity. The feelings of guilt seem perfectly natural and appropriate to the occasion. You condemn yourself over and over again and wish that you had never committed the deed. In all probability these feelings will be so severe that in the future, when faced with a similar situation, you will not repeat this behavior.

There are people, however, who suffer from severe feelings of guilt over trifling mistakes that do not really matter. In extreme cases they may, at times, be overcome with feelings of guilt although they have no recollection of having performed an unsocial act that could possibly account for them. To us such feelings seem entirely unintelligible. We have difficulty in understanding their reactions. They do not seem to serve a useful purpose in the life of the individual, nor do they help to guide his behavior into social channels. On the contrary, they bring great unhappiness in their train and handicap the individual in his attempts to live a normal life in our society. How are we to explain such reactions?

Let us review the origin of these feelings. In order to es-

cape from an early family conflict, the child identifies with a parent and some of his aggressive impulses, previously directed toward the parent, are turned inward against his own ego. Fear was one of the determining factors leading to the original identification, and it continues to be the great deterring force. The mature individual, however, no longer fears the real parent's punishment but that of the parent image, the super-ego. This punishment is experienced as feelings of guilt and remorse.

The concept of the super-ego and its origins is, perhaps, one of the greatest contributions of psychoanalysis to the understanding of human behavior. Through it we can see why human beings in widely different cultures almost always conform to the pattern of their own particular culture. Earlier theories had held that somehow these cultural patterns were transmitted by heredity from one generation to another. Such a belief is based on the assumption that "human nature" differs in people living in different cultures. With the discovery that the cultural pattern is incorporated by the individual in the course of his own development, the many divergences in personal standards, behavior, and emotional responses can be understood in terms of the differences in training and environmental factors which each individual experiences. We need no longer be mystified by the fact that Johnnie, like his father, cannot spell, or that Mary's attitude about sewing is just like her mother's. These characteristics were not inherited, but were acquired through identification. They can, therefore, be changed under proper circumstances.

### § *Resistance to cultural change.*

We can also understand, in part at least, why we resist changes in our value system or beliefs. Through the original identification these cultural patterns have become a part of

ourselves. Just as we hoped to find security in modeling our lives after those of our parents, so we find a certain security in their values, standards, and ways of thinking. These form an essential part of our parent image. They are the standards by which we measure our performances and guide our conduct. When we discover, as adults, that some of these early patterns no longer fit the demands of changing culture, we become deeply disturbed. Grandma, for example, may be shocked when she sees how her grandchildren "carry on" today. The world has changed considerably since she was a child. The same is probably true in the case of mother and father. Members of each generation are amazed at the standards of succeeding generations. Their own values always seem to them to be the better ones, and they experience difficulty in adjusting to the change. Any change in the cultural pattern shakes the security they obtained from the values they incorporated in their ego-ideals. It is difficult for them to imagine a world in which these same standards will no longer be operative. They hold on to them, therefore, even though they may appear incongruous in the light of the new cultural conditions. This incongruity is largely absent in members of the younger generation. The new cultural order is accepted by them as perfectly natural and combines with the modified patterns of their parents to form their ego-ideals. As they grow older and the ego-ideal is rounded out by further cultural contacts, they experience difficulty in understanding how their parents can continue to adhere to such an obsolete point of view. As adults they will probably regard their own children's generation with misgivings just as their own parents looked upon them. Each generation believes its own standards to be the best and consequently resists any attempts to alter them.

§ *The individuality of conscience.*

It follows that what we usually call *conscience* varies from generation to generation, from culture to culture, and from one individual to another. It is not, as was once supposed, the voice of a supernatural power which guides us, but results from the interaction of forces within ourselves. The relative strengths of these forces are determined by constitution, training, experience, and cultural milieu. Since these factors are never identical in the case of two different individuals, there will be differences in the conscience that each will develop. In a fairly constant cultural milieu, these differences will, in general, be comparatively slight. Nevertheless, a wide divergence from the common cultural pattern on the part of the parent may result in a defective conscience in the children. If an individual is brought up in a family where stealing is an accepted mode of behavior, for example, this standard may be included in his ego-ideal although it is not part of the general cultural pattern. In later life such an individual can steal without suffering "qualms of conscience." The same holds true of all other unsocial tendencies. The standards by which the "conscience" or an individual operates are the standards of his ego-ideal based on the child's image of his parents.

The action of "conscience," however, does not depend upon the ego-ideal alone. The ego-ideal serves as the code by which transgressions are judged, but it does not determine the degree of punishment to which the ego will be subjected. The latter depends upon the severity of the punitive function of the super-ego which, as we have seen, is determined by the intensity of the aggressive impulses the child believes his parents have directed against him. Some of these impulses may actually have been in the parents, whereas others are projected upon them by the child. In

identifying with the parent image to form a super-ego, these exaggerated aggressive tendencies are included and become the foundation of the punitive function while the remainder of the parent image persists unchanged and becomes the ego-ideal. One can suppose that the ego-ideal is based on love, whereas the super-ego is rooted in fear and aggression. The result is that some people have high ego-ideals but lenient punitive functions. When such a person fails to live up to the demands of the ego-ideal, he does not suffer greatly from a "bad conscience." Other people have relatively low ego-ideals which they cannot violate without severe feelings of guilt. In practice all gradations of these two functions are found in combination with one another.

Since an effective super-ego is highly important for adequate social adjustment, it is well to investigate its structure and operation more fully. In studying people we often find that a stern super-ego may, for example, be developed in a child whose father is in reality a strict disciplinarian and shows little or no affection to the child. The image that the child will have of such a father will be that of a forbidding person who shows neither love nor mercy. If the child identifies with this image, his super-ego will reflect these same characteristics. It, too, will be forbidding, intolerant of transgressions, harsh in its judgments, and without mercy. The child, or adult, as the case may be, may even welcome punishment from others to confirm the judgment of his super-ego.

¶ *Punishment as a means of reinforcing the super-ego.*

This is not an uncommon reaction, particularly in childhood when the integration of the personality is still weak. At times the child struggles with unsocial impulses or phantasies which he knows to be wrong and has managed par-

tially to repress. Yet he is left with a strong sense of guilt of which, he feels, only external punishment can rid him. The child, under these circumstances, often goes out of his way to get into mischief in order to have his parents punish him. Having been punished, he feels better. The super-ego has been bolstered up by the external authority, and the repression is strengthened. There are some criminals, especially adolescents, who commit crimes, not for any tangible gains that the crime might bring, but in order to receive punishment from an external agent, the judge or parent substitute, and thereby free themselves from an excessive sense of guilt.

In many cases it turns out that the sense of guilt does not arise from a real crime that has been committed but from early aggressive phantasies which were repressed and now threaten to return to consciousness. The repressing forces are strong enough to keep the phantasy itself from entering consciousness, but it comes so close that the super-ego reacts and inflicts punishment on the ego. In consequence, the individual has a feeling of guilt without any rational content.

This condition is particularly annoying because we are completely at a loss to explain it from a logical point of view. When we feel guilty, we want to have something to feel guilty about. We want a reason for our feelings and for the punishment we receive. In searching for a reason, such a person often reviews his activities for days past in the hope of finding something about which he can legitimately feel guilty. In the search he usually finds some minor incident which would ordinarily pass unnoticed and then magnifies it to make it fit his feelings. Perhaps he left the party without bidding good night to Mrs. Jones, or was a trifle curt in replying to Mr. Brown, or was too brusque in denying a favor to Mr. Green, or forgot to do something Mr. Roe requested. Almost any incident will serve. A dis-

placement of the effect then takes place. The guilt arising from the unconscious phantasy is attached to the minor incident, and the individual acts as though it really belonged there. In order to get rid of the guilt he then calls up or writes a letter full of the most profuse apologies. The recipient may well be surprised at such a performance. Perhaps he had not noticed the incident, or if he did, it meant little to him. Consequently, he cannot understand how anybody can make such a fuss about nothing. Little does he realize that the individual is only trying to free himself of guilt arising from the unconscious and has chosen him as the scapegoat.

§ *Super-ego punishment versus real punishment.*

It is very interesting to notice the relationship between inner and outer punishment. Ordinarily, if we commit a misdemeanor and are caught and punished for it by some one in authority, we do not suffer very much from a "bad conscience." We seem to feel that we have received our due—that the slate is clean, so to speak. If, however, the same misdemeanor remains undetected, and consequently unpunished, the "bad conscience" appears in full force. Frequently this self-inflicted punishment is far more severe than that which would have been administered by the external authority had the transgression been discovered. Shakespeare, in *King Lear*, says:

Tremble, thou wretch,  
That hast within thee undivulged crimes  
Unwhipp'd of justice.

We have all heard of criminals who, after years of freedom, give themselves up to the authorities in order to take their punishment and get rid of their feelings of guilt. Likewise, every city maintains a "Conscience Fund" into which people



who have cheated the city at one time or another can send their overdue obligations and "clear" their minds. These "contributions" are not always large. Every now and then some one will send a dime or a quarter that was dishonestly deducted from taxes ten or fifteen years earlier. Even such a small sum was sufficient to disturb their peace of mind during all those years.

The fact that a "bad conscience" is due to our own aggression, turned against ourselves, may not seem convincing at first. From the very nature of the case it is difficult to demonstrate in the manner in which we like to have our scientific theories demonstrated. But, as we indicated earlier, every science must accommodate itself to the peculiarities of its subject-matter. In the present instance we cannot control the expression of aggressive impulses in an individual and turn them inward or outward as we choose. The individual himself cannot even do it for us. Nevertheless, there is a considerable amount of evidence to support our contentions. The most direct evidence comes from psychoanalytical work with individuals. Here one finds over and over again that as the severity of the super-ego is reduced through the treatment, the sense of guilt arising from unconscious sources is lessened, and the individual's aggression becomes directed to the outer world where it can serve a useful purpose. Sometimes we can almost see such a change in friends who have been "depressed" for a period of time.

Then, too, history gives us innumerable examples of the opposite type of reaction in which the aggression is withdrawn from the outer world for one reason or another. Consider the monks of the Middle Ages. We could probably all agree that these persons led extremely virtuous lives according to the cultural standards of the time. They denied themselves all the "worldly pleasures" and sought to live in accordance with the highest religious and ethical precepts.

Many lived alone in order to escape temptation. Offhand, we would suppose that these persons would be free from super-ego punishments—that their lives were so close to perfection that they would have nothing for which to revile themselves. But many of their writings tell quite a different story. Many of them suffered unknown tortures. The more virtuous their lives became, the more their consciences bothered them, and the more punishment they had to inflict upon themselves. In the end many of them resorted to flagellations and self-inflicted physical pain in order to free themselves of their sense of guilt. Is it too far-fetched to suppose that these self-inflicted tortures were anything but substitute forms of expression for the aggression they refused to direct toward the outer world?

It is not even necessary to go back into the Middle Ages to find examples of this kind. The Puritans in our own country had a somewhat similar philosophy. They, too, denied expression to many of their fundamental needs. The more they denied themselves the worse their consciences became, and the more horrible did they conceive the tortures of Hell to be. This increased fear of punishment in Hell was then used to reinforce the super-ego in its task of maintaining incredible inhibitions and repressions. Aggressive impulses were also denied direct expression, and we know how merciless these people became in their judgments of themselves as well as of others. When their aggression finally found an outlet in the external world, in the persecution of witches, symbols of their own unconscious tendencies, they showed no mercy. In order to gratify their repressed need for retaliation and maintain their own repressions, they sent numbers of innocent people to their deaths.

On the other hand, we find that in times of stress, during a war, for example, when large quantities of aggression are

expended in the outside world, there is a noticeable lowering of moral standards. Persons who, under normal circumstances, would be classed as highly moral individuals are then able to perform all kinds of aggressive acts without experiencing severe super-ego punishments. And so it seems that there is an inverse relationship between the amount of aggression directed toward the outer world and the amount directed against the self by way of the super-ego.

In contrast to the individuals who have developed severe super-egos, we find those who did not resolve their early conflicts in this way. These individuals lack the strong inner authority that restricts their behavior to socially accepted patterns. Such individuals appear immature, from an emotional point of view. They are impetuous whenever need tensions arise, egocentric, self-centered, and selfish. They never really become socialized individuals who can adjust themselves flexibly to the demands of the culture. Their aggressive impulses, like all their other needs, are unbridled and seek direct gratification in the outer world, regardless of the rights of others.

Some of these persons manage, under social pressure, to conform to the general pattern of the culture. On the surface they seem to restrain themselves to a fair degree and to abide by the mores of their group. Such restraint, however, is not imposed by an internal social authority, the super-ego, but through fear of the external punishment that will be meted out if they are caught. When they are fairly certain that they will not be caught, many do not hesitate to gratify their needs in ways that are socially prohibited. If they are successful and remain undetected, they suffer little from a sense of guilt or a "bad conscience." They are the people who like to "get by" with as much as they possibly can. Individuals of this type form a fair proportion of every culture.

¶ *The job of the ego is extremely difficult.*

From the previous discussion we can now understand how complicated the job of the ego is. On the one hand, it has the external environment to contend with. It must avoid the dangers involved in the powerful forces to be found there. It must gain an accurate knowledge of the world in order to safeguard its own physical well-being. Furthermore, since the demands of the environment are continually changing, it must find new and appropriate forms of behavior to fit these changes. On the other hand, the ego must contend with the need tensions that demand satisfaction in this external world. It must not only institute behavior to attain the desired goals, but it must guide that behavior into those channels which will bring the maximum of pleasure with a minimum of pain. Here, too, a knowledge of the world, and the people in it, is essential. The ego must make choices and decisions and look for suitable rewards. This alone would be a difficult task without the complicating factor of the super-ego which permits the ego to find its need gratifications only in particular channels and by approved means. An inner danger is added to those of the outer world.

And so the ego stands in the middle of three powerful influences—the individual's needs, the external environment, and the super-ego. Its job is to satisfy all three at the same time. Little wonder it is sometimes confused by the complexity of living! For a happy and useful life these three factors must be brought into a harmonious relationship with one another. If any one of the three makes excessive demands, the ego must inhibit or circumscribe its functions and thereby reduce its efficiency in order to maintain a balance with the other two.

We have already described some of the consequences when too much pressure is brought to bear upon the ego

from internal sources. Now let us consider what happens when the environment makes unreasonable demands. Suppose that an individual has a fairly stern super-ego which disapproves of stealing, for example. Under ordinary circumstances the fear of super-ego punishment is sufficient for the ego to hold primitive impulses to steal in check. Then, suddenly, this individual loses his job and cannot find another. For days he wanders the streets, hungry and unsuccessful in his quest for work. In his wanderings he passes many food shops, bakeries, and fruit stores. The sight of food makes his hunger even more unbearable. It becomes harder and harder for him to resist the temptation to steal when he has the opportunity. The ego must choose between the pain of punishment from the super-ego if it steals and the pain of hunger if it does not. A point is reached where the super-ego punishment seems the lesser of the two evils, and the individual steals. His cultural standard is temporarily discarded.

§ *The action of the "will."*

In everyday language we would probably say that the individual did not have sufficient "will power" to resist the temptation. What we usually speak of as "will power" seems to be nothing more than the success of the super-ego in enforcing its edicts upon the ego. An individual has the "will" to resist a specific temptation or need demand, provided the painful effects of the super-ego punishment are greater than those of the need tension in question. Should the effects of the need tension exceed those of the super-ego, owing to a difficult environment, the internal social structure of the individual breaks down temporarily, and he indulges in the prohibited form of expression.

It seems, then, that what we ordinarily call the "will" is not the mystical force it was formerly supposed to be. True,

in everyday experience it sometimes seems to come from outside ourselves and influences us in strange ways, but this is due to the fact that the large part of the super-ego function operates on an unconscious level. We experience its effects as coming from outside ourselves because they come from outside our conscious egos. We do not, however, need to call in extranatural forces to explain it or its action.

The problem of whether a given individual has "will power" or not, depends, therefore, on a number of factors: the specific need demanding satisfaction, its place in the ego-ideal, the possibilities of gratification in the environment in ways compatible with the ego-ideal, the intensity of the need, and the fear the ego has of the super-ego function. Under these circumstances it is obvious that the "will" cannot be developed by practice as we develop a muscle, or that you can "Learn to Develop Your Will Power in a Few Easy Lessons" as so many advertisements claim. On the contrary, the manifestations of the "will" depend upon the organization and distribution of all the forces of personality.

The "will," as all other aspects of personality, is the outcome of our early training and experience. It varies from one individual's reaction to the cultural pattern as represented by the persons with whom he has identified. Whether or not it will be effective in forcing the ego along a given path will depend on the relative strengths of the three sets of influences bearing on the ego—the primary needs, the environment, and the super-ego.

# 11

## ESCAPES

¶ *The ego must be diplomatic in performing its duties.*

TO MAINTAIN harmony between these three different sets of forces—the needs, the environment, and the super-ego—becomes the chief task of the ego. This is not always easy since the demands of one are often incompatible with the demands of another. The ego, in such a case, must use caution and diplomacy in order to resolve the conflict in the most advantageous manner. For purposes of illustration consider a simple example. Johnnie is learning to ride a bicycle and is enjoying himself thoroughly. Freddie, a much larger and stronger boy, takes the bicycle away from him. Johnnie's need for retaliation is aroused by Freddie's action, and makes demands on his ego that it initiate behavior that will result in the recovery of his property.

The first impulse of the ego, under these circumstances, is to attack Freddie. From earlier experiences and general knowledge about situations of this kind, however, the ego concludes that this is not a reasonable procedure since an attack upon Freddie would, in all likelihood, be unsuccessful. Furthermore, it might result in a severe pummeling of himself which would be both undesirable and dangerous. Johnnie's first impulse must, therefore, be checked. He must find other means of dealing with the situation. His second

impulse may be to pick up a stone lying near-by, to hurl it at Freddie and disable him to such an extent that a counter-attack would be impossible. He could then recover the bicycle and proceed with his play. Such a plan might work, but Johnnie's super-ego steps into the picture and inhibits it. Behavior of this kind is not in keeping with his ego-ideal, and if he participates in it, the super-ego will punish the ego with a "bad conscience." The ego also fears this result and, consequently, rejects this possibility.

Still another way of dealing with the situation must be found. The ego rapidly considers one possibility after another. He could go and report the fact to Freddie's father, to his school-teacher, or to the nearest policeman, but such behavior also calls out the disapproval of his super-ego which abhors "squealers." And so Johnnie is caught between his own need demands, his super-ego, and the forces in the external environment. To gratify the need demands directly would involve him in a dangerous external situation or bring painful super-ego punishment. To deny gratification to the need is also painful. The ego is in a quandary.

In order to extricate itself from such a predicament the ego must have many possibilities at its command and be able to evaluate them in the light of probable consequences. This requires detailed knowledge of the external world and the forces in it as well as many past experiences from which it can judge the possibility of success. For instance, if Johnnie, in the past, has been quite successful in enlisting the help of other playmates in his behalf, he may now seek their aid in overcoming his adversary and recovering his bicycle. By manipulating the environment for his own ends he is able to reduce its dangers to himself and give expression to his need. If this course is not feasible, he may strike a compromise with Freddie by which Freddie loans Johnnie his jack-knife while he, Freddie, rides the bicycle. If such a



compromise is impossible, he may yield the bicycle to Freddie, hold his own aggressive impulses in check, for the time being, and then express them later in subtle ways that do not involve an immediate threat to his safety and do not come in conflict with his super-ego. Telling injurious tales about Freddie might be such an outlet.

There are still other possibilities. Johnnie might take the attitude of a "good fellow" who yields the bicycle gracefully and tells Freddie to ride it as much as he wishes. By this behavior he may seek to gain the friendship and support of Freddie whose strength he has always admired. As a friend Freddie might not be so demanding, and through his new affiliation Johnnie may gain status and security among his playmates. Or Johnnie might, in the face of the unpleasant consequences of direct expression, take a defeatist attitude and suppress both the desire for the bicycle and the desire for retaliation. In this case he would tell himself that he wasn't having any fun with the bicycle anyway, and now that he is rid of it, he can do something else. Or he may think more in terms of the future. When he gets the bicycle back, he may resolve to avoid the section of the town in which Freddie is usually found and confine his activities to sections in which this danger does not exist. In this way he safeguards himself against a repetition of the painful experience by limiting the field of his own activities.

And so we could go on, enumerating all kinds of possibilities open to the ego in a situation in which outer forces or circumstances stand in opposition to the inner demands that are made upon the ego. The course of behavior the ego finally adopts will be the one which it considers to be the best compromise under the prevailing circumstances. As the intensity of the different sets of forces varies, from one situation to another, so will the choice of alternative forms of behavior by the ego vary.

This simple example illustrates clearly how difficult the task of the ego is in ordinary life. Many factors must be taken into consideration, and many alternative courses of behavior must be evaluated. In most of the problems arising out of ordinary everyday living, the ego performs this function with great rapidity and surprising success. Only occasionally does it look back over its performance and concede that another course might have been more profitable or satisfying.

In our example, however, the ego was in a fairly advantageous position to decide on the most satisfactory course to pursue. It was clearly aware of the needs which were demanding gratification and the goals toward which they were directed. The mandates of the super-ego, too, were clearly defined and easily applied to the proposed forms of conduct. Furthermore, the probable consequences from the environment could be determined with a fair degree of accuracy in terms of similar experiences in the past. In other words, in such a situation the ego has a great deal of available data from the three opposing sets of forces. And yet, as we have seen, the task of guiding behavior under these circumstances is not easy.

How much more difficult is the ego's job when the need demands are buried in the unconscious through repression. The individual finds himself in an external situation which, as far as he is consciously aware, is harmless. Nevertheless, the ego reacts with feelings of anxiety, insecurity, inferiority, or guilt—signals that all is not well and that the ego should do something about it. The ego, however, is unable to take active counter-measures because it neither recognizes the real danger, consciously, nor is it aware of the underlying needs clamoring for gratification. It only knows that super-ego punishment is imminent in one form or another. The

entire situation is vague and indefinite, and yet the ego is called upon to act.

How can the ego make a choice or effect a compromise when it is not acquainted with the alternatives and has no immediate way of finding out? The desires that demand gratification are cut off by the unconscious mechanism of repression. The ego is, consequently, ignorant of the goal that would gratify the need and, hence, cannot provide it with less dangerous substitutes which would offer partial satisfaction. The function of the conscious ego is partially paralyzed under these circumstances.

§ *Is repression a satisfactory solution for the ego?*

Another factor further complicates the problem of the ego. We may grant that the original goal of the need was dangerous and that its expression would have resulted in painful consequences to the ego. This is usually not really the case, but it seemed so to the inexperienced and poorly equipped ego of childhood. But granted that it was dangerous and the ego was justified in repressing the desire in order to safeguard its own well-being, the mechanism of repression does not stop there. If it did, the ego would experience anxiety only when circumstances were such that the specific goal of the desire was obtainable. We know that this is not so. The repression always goes beyond the immediate necessity and affects other desires closely associated with the original one, even though these other desires may, in themselves, be harmless.

An analogy in the physical world may help to clarify this phenomenon. If we place the opposing poles of two electromagnets under a sheet of paper upon which iron filings have been scattered, and then bring the poles close together, an electromagnetic field is set up. This electromagnetic field,

however, is not confined to the area lying directly between the two poles as we can see from the arrangement of the iron filings. The magnetic field extends for a considerable distance, depending on the intensity of the poles, in all directions. A large area is affected. The nearer the magnets are, the greater is the opposition. As we move away from the magnets, the opposition gradually diminishes and finally disappears. The important thing to notice is that the repellent action is not restricted to a single point, but spreads over a considerable distance on all sides.

The effects of repressing forces are similar. The greatest opposition is exerted against the original desire. In addition, all the desires associated with the original one are also repressed in varying degrees. The closer the association between a given desire and a repressed one, the more resistance must be overcome before it can gain admission into the realm of the conscious ego. Even if such an "innocent" desire succeeds in overcoming the resistance and wins conscious recognition, the super-ego often "senses" its relationship to the original desire. Feelings of anxiety and insecurity are aroused. The "innocent" desire is regarded with fear and suspicion as though it, too, were forbidden. The only difference lies in the intensity of the reaction. The more closely a desire is unconsciously associated with a repressed one, the more anxiety does its appearance in consciousness arouse.

#### § *The case of Robert Fraser.*

The effect of a repression on the development of an individual can be seen clearly in the following example. Robert Fraser's mother was very particular about her young son's appearance and clothes. From infancy she insisted that he be adequately and attractively dressed. Coupled with her anxiety over his appearance, her violent reaction whenever Robert ran around his home half-clothed or unclothed—an

activity that seemed perfectly natural in his childish exuberance—eventually frightened him into extreme modesty. Not understanding the reason for his punishment—nor the value our culture attaches to clothes—Robert concluded that his body was something to be ashamed of. He became retiring and modest, thus repressing his natural attitude toward his body. In the beginning the repression may possibly have served a social purpose. But like all repressions, this one went far beyond the immediate need. In school Robert felt anxious and uncomfortable when he appeared before others in a gym suit or shorts. The repression had clearly gone far beyond any useful limits. But it went even further. The mere fact that he was the center of attraction, that people were looking at him, was enough to call out an anxiety reaction. As an adult he reacted with anxiety and embarrassment if he was called upon to speak before an audience or if attention was attracted to him in any way. Thus a strong repression in childhood spread to activities that only remotely resembled the original one. Not only did the repression pass the limits of usefulness, but it reached the point where it was distinctly harmful to the welfare of the individual.

Repression has an added disadvantage. Since, as we have seen, the need is a form of energy which constantly seeks expression, it follows that it can only be rendered ineffective by the action of other needs. This means that in order to maintain the repression of one form of need expression, the ego must divert some of the energy of other needs to perform this function. The result is that the energy of the repressing need or needs as well as that of the repressed, are lost to the ego for constructive purposes. Every repression, therefore, impoverishes the ego of energy that could be used for more useful ends. The greater the number of repressions, therefore, and the more intense their underlying needs, the

less energy will be available to the ego with which to meet the demands of living.

§ *The ego may retreat from the situation that brings on anxiety.*

Under these circumstances it is of vital importance to the ego to escape, as far as possible, from the devastating effects of its own repressions. Two alternatives are open to it—it can either change its own internal dynamics to meet the threat effectively, or it can remove itself to an external environment which does not arouse the repressed desires. Usually a combination of these alternatives is used, although the ego's first tendency is to do something about the environment.

Retreat from a dangerous situation is one of our most fundamental reaction patterns. It is true that in the present case the danger lies within the individual and not in the external situation, but, nevertheless, there is a tendency to react as though it were outside ourselves. This tendency is probably a carry-over from childhood. As long as the dangers were "out there," the individual could avoid them by restricting his activities to approved areas. As an adult he still tries to use this technique in order to escape from dangers even though, in the meantime, some of these dangers have become internalized, and it becomes harder to avoid them by restricting one's activities. The result is that the ego tries to "escape" from situations that bring on these feelings of anxiety, insecurity, inferiority, or guilt. This maneuver serves a double purpose. By avoiding the situation in which the unconscious desire could be gratified, the demands of this desire for conscious recognition and gratification are lessened, as we discovered earlier in our study. This makes it more controllable by the ego and reduces the necessity for anxiety reactions. In addition, as the danger of these claims

is diminished, the ego can withdraw some of the energy used in maintaining the repression and divert it into more productive channels.

The difficulty with this form of escape is that in withdrawing from given situations the ego limits its field of activity and denies itself the opportunity of finding gratification for other needs in those areas. Owing to the effect of the repression on associated desires, withdrawal may mean a very real curtailment of possibilities. Then, too, if the same escape is used with different repressions, the ego may find itself so limited in its field of operations that little is left. Social situations may be avoided entirely as with Silas Marner: "So, year after year, Silas Marner had lived in this solitude, his guineas rising in the iron pot, and his life narrowing and hardening itself more and more into a mere pulsation of desire and satisfaction which had no relation to any other being."

Silas Marner is an extreme case. There are, nevertheless, a great many people who adopt this type of reaction to a lesser degree. In order to avoid social contacts or situations in which repressed desires may lead to increased inner tensions they become pioneers, explorers, go to sea, or adopt some other occupation in which disturbing feelings are not apt to arise. Louis Hémon gives a beautiful illustration of this kind of reaction in his story, *Maria Chapdelaine*:<sup>1</sup>

"Many times it happened, after we had spent five or six years in one place and all had gone well, that we were beginning to get together a nice property—good pasturage, broad fields ready for sowing, a house lined inside with pictures from the papers. . . . Then people came and settled about us; we had but to wait a little, working on quietly, and soon we should have been in the midst of a well-to-do settlement where Laura could have

<sup>1</sup> Louis Hémon, *Maria Chapdelaine*, translated by W. H. Blake (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1921), pp. 269-270. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

passed the rest of her days in happiness. . . . And then all of a sudden I lost heart; I grew sick and tired of my work and of the countryside; I began to hate the very faces of those who had taken up land near-by and used to come to see us, thinking that we should be pleased to have a visitor after being so long out of the way of them. I heard people saying that farther off toward the head of the Lake there was good land in the forest; that some folk from St. Gedeon spoke of settling on that side; and forthwith I began to hunger and thirst for this spot they were talking about, that I had never seen in my life and where not a soul lived."

Other persons, in whom repressions are less severe or widespread, remain in closer contact with other people but still keep their distance. They may live outside the city limits where the possibility of friends dropping in unexpectedly is greatly reduced; they may build high walls or hedges around their homes, hide behind a staff of secretaries, confine their work to a laboratory or library, or in other ways escape from intimate relationships with people. James Stephens describes this attitude in his poem, "The Road": <sup>1</sup>

Because our lives are cowardly and sly,  
Because we do not dare to take or give  
Because we scowl and pass each other by,  
We do not live: we do not dare to live.

We dive, each man, into his secret house,  
And bolt the door, and listen with affright,  
Each timid man beside a timid spouse,  
With timid children huddled out of sight.

Sometimes these feelings are only aroused in a single situation or area as, for example, the home. This type of reaction is particularly common during adolescence. The individual may feel very free and easy away from home, enjoy the company of others, and participate in all kinds of social

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company, Publishers.



activities. As soon as he enters his own home, however, he feels tense and uncomfortable. He becomes irritable, unruly, and sensitive to the actions of others. In spite of all his efforts he is unable to feel at ease and take part in the activities of the family. Everything he does seems to go wrong, and every well-intentioned remark sticks in his throat. The more he tries to control these feelings and reactions, the more aggravated they seem to become.

The adolescent, in this situation, is mystified. He lacks all understanding of the unconscious forces that make him feel as he does and tends to attribute his reaction to minor elements in the external situation. He may believe that his parents are trying to bind him to a childish rôle, that they refuse to let him grow up, that they are always picking on him, that he is not wanted, that they are depriving him of many things to which he is entitled, that he is not loved, that he is in the way, that they have secrets which they keep from him, and so on. Parents are often deeply grieved by these reactions on the part of their adolescent child. They feel that they have made great sacrifices in order that he may enjoy advantages which they considered helpful to him; they are certain that what they are doing is entirely in his interest, that they love him dearly and want only his love in return, that they have made every possible effort to make him feel how much he means to them and to have him take part in the family life—and yet he rebukes them, accuses them, and deserts them.

Such a situation is naturally hard to bear. If we consider only the behavior aspects, it is almost incomprehensible and incapable of solution. We must look below the surface of the adolescent's behavior and understand that his behavior is not solely a reaction to the real family as it exists at the present time, but much more an attempt to ward off the demands of unconscious desires that have been reinforced

through the process of maturation. These repressed desires now exert added pressure on the ego which attempts to control them and avoid super-ego punishment by building defenses against them. But since the unconscious desires are elusive, the ego turns the tables and builds up defense against the real parents instead. As soon as the ego is able to master these prohibited desires by an adequate system of defenses, the adolescent again becomes the loving and co-operative child the parents long for.

Often the conflict between the ego and the unconscious desires becomes so acute and the feeling arising from it is so unbearable, that the individual believes the only solution lies in escaping from the provoking situation in the home. It seems to him that if he could only throw off the shackles he believes his family are placing on him, he could win his independence and live a happy and useful life. Phantasies of running away from home and accomplishing great things are, therefore, frequent during this period. Some adolescents actually do run away from home in order to escape from their own feelings of anxiety and guilt.

In phantasy this solution seems very simple, but it is rarely successful in reality. The individual has run away from the minor conscious elements in the situation, but he has not succeeded in leaving behind him the much more important unconscious factors. These he has taken with him, and they cause him just as much difficulty as before. The change has not, therefore, accomplished its purpose, even though it may apparently have solved the home problem.

Running away may reduce the intensity of the unconscious conflict. On the other hand, away from home the needs for love, affiliation, acquisition, achievement, safety, food, and so on, do not find the easy gratifications they previously enjoyed. They, therefore, begin to make demands on the ego in their own right. Furthermore, other repressed de-

sires become intensified in this new situation and arouse feelings of anxiety and guilt. Inner difficulties are again projected on the outer environment, and before long the individual may find himself in a worse position than before. When this point is reached, the adolescent is usually glad to return home where a more adequate solution of his difficulties is possible. To be sure, a few individuals still feel that the environment, at home or away from home, is largely to blame for their unhappiness and continue to seek new surroundings. But each environment that seems so ideal from a distance proves equally unfavorable when the individual reaches it. And so he wanders from place to place, always looking for the environment in which he can be happy, but never finding it.

Other persons seek to escape from their unconscious conflicts not by running away from the environment in a physical sense, but by doing so psychologically. Although they appear to be a part of the family group, they have in reality separated themselves from it. Through a system of defenses they isolate themselves from the world around them. Many need gratifications in the outer world are renounced for the vicarious gratifications they may receive through phantasy or through the expression of these needs within their own personalities. Ideas and mental processes, in general, may take on an exaggerated importance for these people which leads them to construct all kinds of beautiful systems and philosophies. Others shut themselves off from the world of reality and live the lives of characters in fiction rather than their own.

§ *Work may be a form of escape from anxiety-producing situations.*

Another favorite method of escape is through work. At first glance this may seem to be a contradiction of terms, but in

reality it is not. In the earlier chapters we saw that consciousness was the battlefield of needs seeking expression and that the strongest need or fusion of needs dominated the conscious thought processes to the exclusion of other needs.

When work is used as a form of escape, the ego unconsciously makes use of this principle. Many of the needs used in repression are fused together and find expression in this single activity. Their combined strength is sufficient to dominate consciousness and prevent disturbing-thoughts and wishes from entering. Furthermore, by emphasizing the imperativeness of his work the individual is able to avoid other situations in which repressed desires may be stimulated and which the ego, therefore, considers dangerous. In addition the ego wins super-ego approval through its efforts and achievements, and what was at first no more than a flight does, in the course of time, acquire the aspects of a virtue.

There is nothing wrong so far as the work accomplished is concerned. On the contrary, this person usually makes an excellent worker and is extremely productive. The difficulty lies in the fact that by using work as a form of escape he loses the satisfactions that work would bring if it served purely as a means of need expression. The goal of his behavior is negative rather than positive. There is another drawback. Since work is used as an escape from unconscious conflicts, the individual can never let go of it. To be without work is to be without his first line of defense. The result is that when he tries to take a vacation, he finds that he cannot relax. He must take work with him or continually worry about what is happening at the office. In the end he may find that the vacation is more exhausting than working at the office all day, and he is glad to get back on the job. Such an individual may eventually find success, but rarely finds real happiness.

§ *Escape through activity.*

Other activities, too, may be used in a similar manner. We all know people who can never be alone. When such a person inadvertently finds himself without companions, he becomes restless and nervous—he just doesn't know what to do with himself. He may sit down to read the newspaper, but that does not satisfy him. He turns on the radio, but the programs do not please him. He reads a book, but finds it dull. And so on from one thing to another. In the end the individual will usually flee from his loneliness into some kind of human companionship. There are indications that the movies are being used more and more for this purpose. In the theater there are always other people, even though they are strangers. At the same time there is something to occupy the mind without exertion. Both factors help in controlling the repressed desires that threaten the individual when he is alone. He may care little about the content of the films shown and have no interest in the artistic production or in the problems confronting the characters. All he wants is something to "amuse" him—that is, something that will keep his mind off his own problems. It is unfortunate that the motion picture is so widely used for the purpose of escape, because it affords a marvelous opportunity for improving our own adjustments through a study of the conflicts of others and the ways and means by which they have resolved them.

§ *Projection can also serve as an escape.*

A not uncommon attempt to escape from the detrimental effects of unconscious conflicts is through projection. By means of this mechanism the individual unconsciously shifts the scene of the conflict. The battle between the ego and the repressed wishes is transformed into a conflict between

the ego and the social order. This brings the battle out into the open where the ego can take active measures. The "wickedness" is no longer within himself, so he thinks, but in the social environment. His hostility, therefore, is turned from one against the other. He becomes a social reformer of various shades and degrees, advocating the overthrow of the old social order and the adoption of a new one.

This form of escape frequently produces excellent results as far as society is concerned. The conditions upon which the individual projects his conflict are, very often, actually unjust or injurious. The projection serves to magnify these conditions and to bring them into the limelight. Furthermore, by persistence and insistence, a few like-minded individuals who have made use of the same situation for their projections often succeed in moving the public to the point where something is actually done to correct the problem. The person who employs this form of escape, however, is not content at this point. The change in the external situation has not changed anything within himself. He must find a new situation upon which he can project these unconscious elements, or he will have to face the conflict in himself. Usually the former method is chosen, and unless a more satisfactory solution to the underlying conflict is found, the individual goes through life fighting what he considers to be gross shortcomings in the present social structure. Through projection he continually creates new bogies which he must master.

#### § *Conformity as a method of escape.*

Rigid conformity to the cultural pattern may also be used as a form of escape from the effects of unconscious conflicts. The psychological forces or dynamics involved in this solution are not clear. It looks as though, under the pressure of circumstances, the individual dethrones the ego-ideal of

childhood to a large extent through a close identification with the social pattern of his present group or a group to which he hopes to belong in the future. From this time on a strict adherence to this pattern is required if the individual is to be free from feelings of anxiety and guilt.

A solution by conforming to the cultural pattern has certain advantages. The individual trades the ephemeral demands of his own super-ego for the more concrete demands of his culture. He can discover these demands and the "correct" ways of behaving through a study of books on etiquette and close observation of people who are really "accepted." He can, therefore, know in advance exactly how he should behave under any given circumstances without the necessity of finding out for himself, through a trial-and-error method, the modes of behavior that meet with the demands of his own individual super-ego and those which do not. When in doubt he needs only to imitate the behavior of others in order to feel secure.

The individual also finds added security and comfort through the knowledge that a great many people conform to a given pattern. He no longer feels so alone in the world. Instead of regarding his conflict as a highly personal one which makes intolerable demands upon him, he now can believe that although the demands may be great, they are no more excessive than those made on other people.

This attitude brings him closer to others inasmuch as new emotional bonds are established through the affiliation in a common understanding. What was previously a group of individuals now becomes a community of people faced with the problem of safeguarding a specific standard. This reaction is particularly noticeable in a group of soldiers. Although under normal conditions the individuals composing the group may manifest all kinds of frictions and cross-tendencies among themselves, the moment a common dan-

ger appears or a common task is to be performed, these personal difficulties disappear and the group presents a united front. New emotional bonds are formed between the members, and each individual sacrifices a part of his individuality for the common good. The banding together into a homogeneous group gives each individual a sense of power, security, and belonging that was unattainable as long as he acted as a single individual.

The merging of the individual with a group has another advantage—namely, that he is no longer completely dependent on his own judgment. While the individualistic super-ego held command, he had to submit completely to its demands and accept its punishments. There was no higher court of appeal, so to speak. Through the ego's identification with the cultural group the individualistic super-ego loses some of this power. The court of last appeal becomes the group itself. Did they disapprove of his actions? Did they reject him as an acceptable member? Did they feel that some kind of punishment was required? If the answer of these questions is "No," then the judgments of his own super-ego are, to a large extent, superseded.

Offhand, this kind of escape seems like an ideal solution. It helps to socialize the individual, gives him support, and relieves him of feelings of guilt and anxiety. All this is true, but it does not really solve the problem—it only transfers it to a new scene. When carried beyond a certain point, conformity makes the individual rigid and intolerant. The defense of the present social order becomes his chief bulwark against his own unconscious desires. He must, consequently, adhere to it in the smallest detail and resist every change in it. He becomes hypersensitive to the approval and disapproval of others and sets a high premium on their acceptance of him. Every remark that can possibly be interpreted as a rebuke or slur upon his integrity is resented and brings on



inappropriate feelings of anxiety. Any appreciable degree of self-realization becomes impossible. In the end the individual is just as hemmed in by the social order as he was by his individual super-ego.

Nevertheless, we should not be too harsh in our judgment of this kind of escape. Very often conformity can be used as a bridge until a more acceptable solution of unconscious conflicts can be found. This is particularly true during the adolescent period when the conflict may be acute. By identifying himself with the cultural pattern, by following his peers in thought, word, and deed, the boy or girl is able to offset the injurious effects of his conflicts for a time, until a more adequate and satisfactory solution can be found. But many parents fail to realize the benefits their adolescent child derives in this way. They have striven for years to produce a real individual only to find that despite all their efforts he is slavishly following the patterns set by his group, even to the sweaters and neckties he wears.

In order to forestall this kind of adjustment the parents redouble their attempts to prevent the individual from conforming. They want him to come home earlier than the others do. Or they want him to stop using slang expressions and dress differently. This is unwise. By interfering with an identification with the cultural pattern of the adolescent group these parents are robbing the youth of the opportunity to gain the time and strength necessary in finding a solution which will then enable him to be a real individual.

#### § *Escape through the use of alcohol or drugs.*

Another method of trying to escape from unconscious conflicts is through the use of alcohol or various forms of drugs. It is well known that these do, to some extent, anesthetize the individual. His feelings are blunted and his critical

functions deadened. One of the most impressive results of intoxication is that the individual is less alert to dangers in the external world. He also seems to be less alert to dangers from within. The result is that under the influence of such a drug the individual can let down the barriers that ordinarily inhibit his actions. While in this condition, he feels free to express hidden tendencies which bring on feelings of anxiety or guilt when he is sober. Even though such reactions are aroused, the individual seems less sensitive to the danger and more lenient in his judgment of it. In a sense, he takes liberties with his super-ego and covers his actions with a cloak of irresponsibility. Nevertheless, his actions during the state of intoxication do provide an outlet for his repressed desires and help to diminish their intensity and, consequently, make them more controllable. Often, however, the guilt he should have experienced during the intoxicated state catches up with him when he returns to a sober condition, and he is filled with remorse. It is, therefore, no more than a temporary escape. The danger lies in the fact that drinking is so easy. Once the individual gets into the habit of using alcohol, he tends to grasp for it whenever the internal pressure begins to increase beyond a certain point. Before long he may turn into a confirmed drunkard who prefers to drown his conflicts rather than to face them. The same process is true for drug addicts.

Retreating to an environment in which unconscious conflicts are less likely to be stimulated; running away from a situation considered dangerous and injurious; flight into a world of phantasy; burying oneself in work, social activities, or amusements; projecting inner conflicts upon the outer environment; hiding behind a cloak of conformity to the cultural pattern; and anesthetizing oneself against the effects of these conflicts through the use of alcohol or drugs

are only a few of the major means of escape which the ego can adopt.

Everybody uses some escape mechanisms from time to time and in varying degrees. Usually the individual is completely unaware of the true motives behind his behavior. Since these motives lie hidden in the unconscious, beyond the reach of the conscious ego which could evaluate their claims in terms of reality, the individual usually only experiences their effects in terms of vague feelings which he cannot understand. His present situation makes him feel uncomfortable, this or that makes him nervous, something else makes him feel anxious, the environment depresses him, and so on. Why a particular situation or environment should affect him in one way while it has an opposite effect on the majority of other people, he does not know. What he does know is that he has a strong tendency to do something about it. Inasmuch as it is difficult for him to come to grips with the problem itself he seeks some avenue of escape from the deleterious effects. Other situations in the external world begin to look far more attractive to him; certain forms of behavior become more enticing or changes in his present circumstances more alluring. He attempts to attain these in one way or another without knowing just why he does so.

#### § *Escape through rationalization.*

The individual, however, is not content to accept his own behavior on this basis. In our culture we have placed such a high premium on intellectual activities and logical forms of behavior that the individual feels compelled to invent a logical reason to account for his unconsciously determined actions. This psychological process by means of which irrational behavior is justified in terms of logically consistent excuses is called *rationalization*. It is another unconscious

mechanism whose purpose is to safeguard the ego from becoming aware of impulses incompatible with its super-ego standards. It serves this purpose since the ego is only too ready to grasp at any explanation that enables it to maintain its repressions, avoid super-ego disapproval, preserve its integrity, and support its desire to be undisputed master of its behavior.

Rationalization is one of the most widely used mechanisms. Unconsciously we all make use of it in some way or other almost every day. Consider the man who uses work as a form of escape. Instead of admitting that he has to keep his mind occupied in one way or another in order to avoid unpleasant thoughts and feelings, he rationalizes and tells us, as well as himself, that work is one of our greatest blessings; that everybody should have an honest occupation; that business conditions are uncertain, and he must be on the job every minute; that he must work long hours in order to earn enough money to support his family in the style to which they have been accustomed; that competition is hard, and in order to get somewhere near the top where one can enjoy a little security, it is necessary to forsake other interests in favor of it. There is an element of truth in every one of these reasons, and a man might really work hard on such grounds. The arguments he presents are, therefore, logical and acceptable. But in the present case they are not the real reasons. They are smoke-screens thrown up to cover the true causes. By means of them he is able to transform his weakness into a virtue, at least as far as he, himself, is concerned.

Exactly the same technique is used to cover every form of escape that the ego may employ. Escapes are explained by high-sounding, plausible, and logical excuses. The ego hates to admit any form of weakness in itself, and this is especially true in situations in which its control over repressed

desires is challenged. Nevertheless, its weakness is clearly discernible when its method of escape is not available. The man who has used work for this purpose is lost when he is without it. If he goes on a vacation, he doesn't know what to do with himself. He cannot enter wholeheartedly into the diversions offered to him. Instead he becomes nervous and fidgety. He worries about things at the office and may experience feelings of guilt about having gone away at just this time, that it is unfair to the others, that something irreparable may happen during his absence, that he promised so and so to do this or that and unless he gets back he will be unable to keep his word, and so on. When the pressure becomes too great, he may give up part of his vacation and rush back to the office and again bury himself in his work or seek some other temporary form of escape suitable to the circumstances. In either case he rationalizes his behavior to his own satisfaction.

Similar manifestations appear whenever the individual is deprived of his escapes. They are particularly clear in cases where drunkenness or drug addiction forms the chief method of escape. If, for one reason or another, the individual cannot escape in the customary manner, he often becomes frantic. Unaccustomed to facing conflicts in himself, he becomes fearful to the point where his actions resemble those of a caged animal rather than those of a rational human being.

¶ *Sublimation is a more satisfactory form of escape.*

There is one form of escape, however, which is far more satisfactory and does not entail these injurious consequences. This is known as *sublimation*, a process by which the energy formerly spent in unconscious conflict is redirected toward a positive end, acceptable in the culture. It is usually a good solution for repressed conflicts and always

represents a substitute outlet for the expression of a repressed, unsocial striving in a socially accepted and valued form. All sorts of activities may be used as sublimating channels. Such professions as research, teaching, medicine, law, music, art, and drama are particularly rich in possibilities of this kind.

The means by which an escape from the disturbance of an unconscious conflict is effected in the case of sublimation are entirely different from those found in other forms. In other escapes no real change in the internal dynamics is made. The individual attempts to run away from situations that will aggravate the conflict, to cover it by accentuating other activities or by numbing his sensitivity to its effects. The underlying problem, therefore, remains unchanged. In sublimation this is not so. A real change in the inner structure takes place. Earlier in our study we found that a repression is not specific. Not only is the tabooed desire or form of expression subjected to its action but, in addition, a great many other desires associated with it are also affected. The result is that any of these, when aroused, enter consciousness accompanied with feelings of anxiety that are disconcerting to the individual, even though the desire itself may be harmless. Every form of escape must, therefore, avoid the arousal of these desires as well as the one that originally brought about the repression.

When sublimation takes place, the individual does not flee. He stands his ground as best he can and unconsciously seeks substitute outlets for his need which lie outside the spread of the repression. When such an outlet has been found, it has free entry into consciousness and can be expressed in behavior without super-ego disapproval. Large quantities of energy which were originally directed to the forbidden goal may now be drained off in the striving for a substitute goal which gratifies the same underlying need.

As the energy is expended in this way, the strength of the tendency to strive for the original goal is diminished, and the ego is able to control it without great difficulty. When the sublimation is really successful, the ego may, in fact, withdraw some of the energies previously used in maintaining the repression and use them for constructive purposes without endangering its own position in relation to the super-ego function. Instead of limiting the sphere of activities of the ego, as in the other forms of escape, sublimation actually increases this sphere by putting at the ego's disposal quantities of energy that were formerly expended in holding each other in check.

A deeper appreciation of the manner in which sublimation operates may be obtained by returning to our early example of the hungry man. Suppose this individual is of very limited financial means. He has his heart set on a steak dinner, but when he arrives at the restaurant, he discovers that the steak dinner is priced beyond his means. Roast beef, chicken, ham, and many other food objects that he would really relish are likewise out of the question. He can do either one of two things. He can go from one restaurant to the other insisting that he must have steak for dinner and refuse to eat anything else. If his means are very limited, he may go on for a long time wasting his energies in a fruitless search. On the other hand, he may seek out a cheaper restaurant and content himself with a meal that stands highest on his list of food preferences and yet does not fall within the forbidden costs. In so doing he gratifies his need for food. It is true that he would still like the steak, but his desire is greatly diminished through the substitution of other food. It enables him to turn his efforts into other directions without continually being confronted with the problem of how he can obtain a steak without having sufficient money to pay for it.

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This, however, is not really a case of sublimation. The conflict in the example is entirely conscious, and the ego can evaluate the various possibilities and direct its energies into chosen channels. When sublimation takes place, the conflict is entirely unconscious. The need is present, but the ego has no awareness of the goal toward which it is directed and, consequently, has no knowledge of the substitutes that could gratify it. The best it can do under these circumstances is to try all sorts of possibilities in the hope of finding one that will serve the purpose without arousing disturbing feelings. When such a substitute activity or goal is found, the energies are automatically sublimated, and the ego escapes from any of the injurious effects resulting from the conflict between its own standards and the unacceptable demands of the need.

When the ego succeeds in sublimating a form of need expression, the resulting behavior may, in many respects, resemble behavior arising from one of the other forms of escape. There are certain criteria, however, by which one form may be differentiated from the other. First, where sublimation has been achieved, the goal is positive rather than negative. The individual, therefore, derives from the activity real pleasure which is largely absent when the activity is used as an escape. Second, when the energies have been successfully sublimated, the individual is free to participate in other normal activities. He is not a "single-track" person but one who has broad interests and is on the lookout for possibilities of finding gratification for other needs that lead to self-realization. And finally, when circumstances are such that he temporarily cannot engage in the given activity, he does not experience the inappropriate anxiety so characteristic of other forms of escape. Sublimation is, therefore, a much desired method of escape from the crippling effects of unconscious conflicts.



# 12

## THE RETURN OF THE REPRESSED

¶ *The growing person becomes his own judge of right and wrong.*

IT is impossible for an individual to grow up in a complex culture like our own without forsaking some of his original need demands. The cultural pressures increase as the individual grows older, and he is forced to direct more and more of his need expressions into other channels. Early in life the conflicts arising between what he would like and what the culture permits are on a conscious level. He may give up one form of need gratification to win other more important forms or avoid punishments which are painful to him. With the growth of the super-ego function, the situation changes. He now becomes, in part at least, his own judge. Internal approval and disapproval become important to him and join hands with the cultural representatives in helping him to redirect his primitive impulses.

When this stage is reached, repression proper sets in. Some of the child's original demands become intolerable to him as well as to those in charge of his training. He tries to disown them as a part of himself and shifts the conflict from a conscious to an unconscious level. The undesirable impulses are checked before they reach consciousness where they would now be disturbing. The child behaves as though these inhibited impulses were entirely foreign to him, and he con-

demns them in himself. He has aligned himself with his culture.

But by disowning his tendencies he does not destroy them. The repressed tendencies continue to strive for representation in consciousness and for some form of expression that will lead to gratification. They become threats to the developing social personality which regards them as dangerous to its own well-being. A system of defenses designed to safeguard the ego from any awareness of their existence is built up. Escape measures of various kinds are adopted in order to reduce the intensity of the tabooed desires to a point at which their repression can be successfully maintained. The task of keeping these forbidden wishes outside the field of consciousness becomes the chief concern of the integrated social personality. Little wonder that they strike us as strange when we read about them. They seem utterly foreign to our conscious personalities but are, nevertheless, a part of ourselves.

### § *Slips of the tongue.*

In spite of all our precautions, repressed desires often return to consciousness in one form or another. The best system of defenses and escapes is insufficient to render these desires completely ineffective at all times. Under ordinary everyday conditions we succeed fairly well, but every now and then a situation arises in which some of the defenses are weakened or we are caught "off guard," and unconscious desires slip into consciousness and influence our thoughts or behavior. Slips of the tongue are of this nature. Most people consider them accidents and attach no particular importance to them. But slips of the tongue are not accidents even though they may differ from what we consciously wanted to say. In a scientific study of behavior there is no room for accidents. Every thought and every fragment of behavior must be con-

sidered the expression of some need or group of needs. Each must have a source of motivation whether its appearance was intentional or unintentional, acceptable or unacceptable.

If we take time to check back on slips of the tongue and are honest with ourselves, we can often find some of the factors that determined their occurrence. These factors are frequently of an unpleasant nature—factors we do not like to admit even to ourselves and which we have tried to push out of our minds. An example will serve to illustrate this. A salesman was calling on a woman customer whose orders meant a great deal to him. Upon entering her office he had intended to open the conversation with, "I hate to bother you," but instead of this he said, "I hate to bother with you." Needless to say, this slip of the tongue placed him in a very embarrassing position and cost him a valued order.

What were the motivations determining this slip? At first the salesman could think of no reason why he should want to say such a thing to a person who meant so much to him. Consciously it seemed to him that she was about the last person in the world he would want to insult, and yet, unintentionally, he had done so. Upon further reflection, however, he remembered that he had always felt a little uncomfortable in her presence—that he could never quite relax and talk easily with her as he could with his other customers. He usually found himself somewhat "tongue-tied" and had, therefore, adopted the practice of rehearsing introductory remarks to himself before he met her, just as he had done in the present instance.

He then recalled that he had a similar feeling in his childhood. His family was very poor, and he had been compelled to do odd jobs for people in the neighborhood in order to augment the family income. Among these neighbors was an elderly lady. She was one of his best customers, for she always

seemed to have a number of odd jobs for him to do whenever he called on her. The relationship, however, was not a happy one. The lady was cranky and demanded that everything be done with the greatest meticulousness. Sometimes he had to do the same job over two or three times before it met with her approval although it seemed to him that his first attempt was quite adequate. This annoyed him terribly, and he soon dreaded going to her home to inquire for work. He had tried to find enough other customers to take up his spare time, but in this he was unsuccessful. Many times he had phantasied how nice it would be to tell her what he thought of her and permanently end the relationship, but this was never possible because of the financial pressure. He, therefore, suppressed these tendencies. The result was, however, that it was difficult for him to talk to her in a friendly manner no matter how hard he tried. As he grew older and other opportunities of earning money were open to him, the relationship came to an end. To all intents and purposes he had completely forgotten about this woman and the aggressive tendencies he had not dared to express.

But these tendencies were still active. For over twenty years he remained unaware of them, but the present situation reawakened them. The customer of the present unconsciously reminded him of the "customer" of his childhood. They were approximately the same age and remotely resembled each other in appearance. Moreover, this woman, too, was very meticulous. Every order had to be filled precisely, and if there was the slightest variation, even though it was of no particular significance, she would return the goods to the factory for correction. She, too, was cranky about details, and more important still, her patronage meant a great deal to him, from a financial point of view, just as odd jobs from the other woman had meant a great deal to him in his boyhood.

These factors combined to determine his attitude in the present situation. Consciously he tried his best to maintain the repressions of the early experience and to meet the present one on an adult level. In striving to do so, however, he became rigid and tongue-tied just as he had in the earlier situation when he had inhibited his aggressive tendencies. But he was not conscious of all this. On the contrary he was completely mystified by his own behavior and his inability to change it to a more adequate and appropriate form. He rehearsed little speeches before entering her office in order to offset these unconscious effects, but while concentrating on cultivating a friendly attitude, he was caught off guard, and the repressed aggressive impulse crept in and transformed his well-intentioned conscious remark into an insult. What he had been unable to express in his youth, he now expressed through a slip of the tongue to another person who reawakened this unconscious phantasy.

When he became aware of the connection between his present behavior and this past experience, he was greatly amused. He felt that he owed his customer an apology and went directly to her. She was not very receptive, but to his amazement he discovered that he could now talk to her in warm and friendly terms. All the tenseness was gone, and words rolled from his lips without effort. He told her the whole story from beginning to end. His honesty, frankness, and sincerity won her confidence. She saw in him an entirely different person from the one she had previously known, and he, in turn, freed from the inappropriate emotions he had carried over from his youth, saw her for the first time as a human being. Through the lifting of this repression a friendly relationship developed between them.

A study of slips of the tongue frequently reveals unconscious material of this kind. By bringing it clearly into consciousness and accepting it as a part of ourselves we are often

able to gain mastery over the repressed impulses that determined it and turn it to constructive purposes.

§ *Other "accidents."*

We frequently misread and mishear things which serve an unconscious purpose. Then, too, we sometimes forget to return things we would like to own, or we may leave belongings at some one's house because we unconsciously wish to pay a second visit, or we may mislay things belonging to a person whom we unconsciously dislike. A strong latent need for retaliation often shows itself in this manner. Perhaps we always keep people waiting. Usually we have a multitude of good excuses to account for our delays. We cannot suppose, however, that such "accidents" always occur just when we are to meet certain people. It seems that these "accidents" are unconsciously determined. There is an old saying to the effect that when a lover keeps the beloved waiting, it is time for the beloved to find a new lover. The significance of many such behavior patterns has been known to the poets for hundreds of years. Most of us have a feeling that all is not well when they occur, but we do our best to justify them through rationalizations. It is only since the advent of dynamic psychology with recognition of the unconscious and the part it plays in our everyday life that we have been able to understand their full implications.

§ *What do our dreams mean?*

Dreams have a similar origin. From earliest days people have sensed that dreams have some significance. Often they have been regarded as prophetic, and there are instances recorded in history in which the leaders of armies have based their campaigns upon them. With the rise of the scientific attitude in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, people began to doubt the divine origins of dreams. But this

tendency on the part of the scientists had little influence on popular thought. People still felt that dreams, somehow or other, had significance if only they could understand what the dreams were trying to say. Since then, many books have been written on the subject, which claim to be aids in understanding the meaning of our dreams. These are the "dream books" which still have a great popular appeal, but only represent guesses, unsubstantiated by any form of scientific research.

Until the beginning of the present century, the dream occupied a position not unlike that previously occupied by ancient hieroglyphics. Through many centuries these early forms of picture-writing intrigued investigators. Although they appeared to be little more than a conglomeration of meaningless symbols, there was general belief that some meaning lay behind them. But how was it possible to get at this meaning? After many years of painstaking research a key was found. The meaningless hieroglyphics could then be translated into meaningful language. Naturally the translation from one form to the other is not easy. This can only be accomplished by an expert after a long and patient study.

The problems entailed in unraveling the mysteries of a dream are even more difficult. The hieroglyphs remained constant and are open to all investigators to study over prolonged periods of time. Not so with the dream. Every dream is a highly individualized product that can be directly observed only once and then under special conditions and by a single observer. He can tell us later what happened in the dream, but he soon discovers that his memory of details is sadly lacking. The result is that we must always confine our study to second-hand material which is not completely reliable.

Early in the present century investigators sought the key to dreams in physiological processes. They pointed out that

certain foods, for example, which were hard to digest, caused the individual to dream horrible dreams which we usually call *nightmares*; that changes in temperature would often induce the sleeper to dream; that during a serious illness dreams are more common than under normal conditions, and so on. Findings of this kind seemed to substantiate the hypothesis that certain physiological conditions were the motivating factors in producing dreams. What these investigators failed to explain was the content of the dreams that resulted. Why should two sleepers exposed to the same sudden change in temperature, for example, experience dreams that differed markedly from each other? If both are subjected to cold, one individual may dream that he is in the tropics, whereas the other dreams that he is at home and that somebody is placing more and more blankets over him. Exposed to the same stimulating conditions, both sleepers would be expected to have similar dreams if, as was supposed, physiological conditions were the only sources of motivation.

¶ *The dream is an expression of an ungratified need.*

It was left to Sigmund Freud to discover the key by means of which dreams could be deciphered. After years of study he came to the conclusion that, although physiological conditions might promote the process of dreaming, the motivation of the dream itself was an unfulfilled "wish," and the dream was an attempt to provide gratification for it. The concept of wish in the Freudian sense is, in many respects, not unlike our concept of need. We could say, therefore, that every dream is a presentation in consciousness of a possible means of gratifying a frustrated need.

In some dreams the need is comparatively clear. When a person is hungry during sleep, he frequently dreams that he



is sitting at a beautiful dinner table. Here the ungratified need is for food, and the sleeper dreams that the need is being gratified. Arctic explorers, as well as other people who have been exposed to conditions of extreme hunger, report that dreams of this type are particularly frequent. In such cases the motivation is relatively easy to find. In the dreams of young children, too, we can often find the ungratified need without difficulty. The young child who has asked Santa Claus to bring him a drum for Christmas, but is frustrated by his parents who want quiet in the home, may dream that Santa has brought him not only the drum he asked for but the biggest one he has ever seen. Moreover, in the dream he may see himself banging away on the drum to his heart's content. By means of the dream, the frustrated desire is granted an imaginary form of gratification.

As the individual grows older, however, his dreams become less obvious. The ungratified need is hidden behind a series of visual representations which appear to have little or no connection with one another. We must suppose, under these circumstances, that something interferes with the direct expression of the need and forces it into these grotesque and unrecognizable forms. From what we already know of the functioning of the personality, it seems logical to suppose that the need or needs finding expression in the dream are those that were repressed because the goals toward which they were directed are unacceptable to the ego. To admit them into consciousness would lead to super-ego punishment. During the day the ego is very much on the alert against their return and succeeds fairly well in maintaining its repressions. At night, however, its vigilance is relaxed to some extent. External stimuli are shut out of consciousness, and repressed desires have a greater possibility of gaining admission. But even under these conditions the repressed desires cannot be expressed too openly. To do so would

alarm the ego and awaken it. In order to obtain any expression at all the desire behind the dream must be concealed and disguised sufficiently to escape detection. When it is not, the ego senses the danger, awakens, and reinforces its repressions.

The so-called *anxiety* dream is an illustration of these mechanisms. An individual may have been in the midst of a dream which was not entirely unpleasant. Suddenly he awakens with a start—cold and shaking with fright. He attributes his fear to the situation portrayed in the dream. Something terrible was about to happen to him. But the dream has probably already vanished from his mind. Try as he will, he cannot recall it. The repressive forces have been brought into play, and the dream, as well as the prohibited desire it was seeking to express, has again been relegated to the unconscious. All that is left is fright. In such cases the fright is usually not due to the dream situation in which the person saw himself but to the fact that the camouflage of the repressed desire was becoming too thin. The terrible thing about to happen, to which the ego reacted with anxiety, was that the ego was about to become aware of the real wish behind the dream. Had it done so, its own integrity would have been disturbed, and super-ego punishment would have resulted. This was the danger which awakened the sleeper. The dream is, therefore, in a sense the guardian of sleep rather than the disturber of it, as we commonly think. Repressed desires are the real disturbers.

¶ *Dreams are often camouflaged by an exchange of symbols.*

How are dreams disguised? Dream construction is a very complicated process, and we can only mention a few of the simpler mechanisms which are commonly used. One of these is the transposition of symbols. This may be accomplished

on the basis of similarity of sound, appearance, or function. In our language we can find a great many words that sound the same but have different meanings, such as *mourning* and *morning*; *eye* and *I*; *rain*, *rein*, and *reign*; *pane* and *pain*; *one* and *won*; *steak* and *stake*; *meat* and *meet*; *soul* and *sole*; and the like. If, in the construction of a dream, one word is substituted for the other and then put in pictures, the meaning is already fairly well camouflaged. For instance, you might dream that you are having dinner with a person you consider an enemy, and he hands you a large piece of steak on a silver platter. You wake up and cannot figure out why you should have dreamed such an absurd thing since you thoroughly dislike this individual, and consciously you want to have nothing whatever to do with him. The dream becomes intelligible when we discover that this enemy is a wealthy individual (whom you envy). You happen to be in a "tight spot" at the moment and have wondered where you can borrow the money to finance a venture that promises good returns. What the dream is really saying is this: "If I could get together with this individual [who has money] on a friendly basis he might hand me a stake on a silver platter and then my problem would be solved without further efforts on my part." On a conscious level this thought, however, is very repugnant to you—in fact, you might be willing to swear that you would rather starve than take a penny from him. But the unconscious is not so fussy. It is primarily concerned with having its needs gratified. Through a transposition of these two symbols the unconscious wish receives expression, and yet the dreamer is not disturbed. The possibilities of camouflage by the use of this mechanism alone are almost limitless, especially when we remember that it may also be employed in connection with similarity of appearance or function.

To the dreamer a dream may seem to go on during a good

part of the night. Yet experiments show, and sometimes we have occasion to observe, that the dream can take place in a very few seconds. For example, a man was visiting at the home of a friend with whom he was going fishing the following morning. He had learned, upon his arrival the evening before, that another person for whom he had a violent dislike, had also joined the party. He anticipated a number of arguments with this person but to avoid an embarrassing situation for his host he had said nothing. He retired and slept well during the night. Before daybreak his host came to his room to awaken him, and before speaking to him he snapped on the electric light. The sound of the click in the switch and the sudden light formed the starting point for an elaborate dream from which he awoke in great excitement. His host reported that he had jumped up swinging his arms wildly in the air almost at the moment that the light flashed on. He seemed distraught and frightened. The man then reported the following dream: He was riding on a train over the high mountains. Everything was quiet and beautiful, and he was enjoying the pleasant journey. They were rounding a curve when a freight train was seen approaching from the opposite direction on the same track. The trains collided with a deafening noise, followed by a flash and an explosion.

In the light of what we have recorded, the dream becomes intelligible. The journey is represented as the fishing trip the man had anticipated. The freight train traveling on the same track represents the friend who is about to join the party. He anticipates a "run-in" and loud arguments. The collision and the resulting fire set off by the click of the switch and the light represent the anger he is trying to repress. He fears that if his anger gets out of hand, it will probably destroy them both. We can now understand the man's

wild behavior on being awakened. Yet this whole dream occupied only a fraction of a second.

¶ *Condensation is another means of camouflaging the true meaning of the dream.*

Most of our dreams are much more thoroughly disguised than either of these examples. Condensation is a dream mechanism which is often used for this purpose. By means of this mechanism several things are amalgamated into a single dream object. Two, three, four, or more persons may, for example, be represented in a dream by a composite person with the hair of one person, the eyes of another, the nose of another, body build of another, the mannerisms of another, and so on. Places may also be camouflaged in this way. A room in the dream may have the shape of one room, the windows of a second, and the furniture of a third. The resulting impression is new and strange—far beyond the immediate recognition of the dreamer. But an analysis of the dream reveals that every item has been taken from the past experience of the individual and has a special significance for him. By putting these items together into one image, time is saved, and real meaning is disguised.

¶ *Displacement of affect also serves as a disguise.*

Displacement is another disguising mechanism by which the emotional content of one idea is attached to another idea that has no logical connection with it. The result is that in a dream you may see yourself taking part in some horrible incident and feel no emotion whatever, and later in the dream you may experience a severe emotional reaction to an insignificant detail that would not disturb you in real life. In everyday living, certain types of situations call out specific emotional reactions. When some one dear to us dies, we feel

sorrow; when a friend is sick, we feel sympathy; when we are in the presence of something wonderful, we feel awe; when we are in a dangerous situation, we feel fear; and so on. Since these reactions follow with great regularity, we are justified in supposing that a close connection exists between a given emotion and the type of situation that initiates it. Even the recalling of an experience brings a slight emotional reaction similar to that aroused by the original situation. But in the unconscious realm of dreams the same situation may not bring the appropriate emotional response.

The experience of an army test pilot illustrates the repression of an emotion in real life while the situation appropriate to it remains in consciousness. This pilot could not understand why he experienced no fear in making his test flights. He realized that this was extremely dangerous work and that every time he took to the air, he was, in reality, taking his life in his hands. While flying, he would try to talk himself into being afraid; he would tell himself that he might be killed in the next test, that he was thousands of feet in the air, and that in case of mishap his parachute might not open; but he could not bring himself to the point where he could experience the slightest fear. A partial explanation of his fearlessness was that unconsciously he was so terrified of what might happen that he could not allow it to become conscious without being completely incapacitated by it. In order to keep on with his work and maintain the integrity of his ego, he had to isolate and repress the emotion which would have been appropriate.

The mechanism of displacement is often used as a means of disguise in dreams. An individual may, for example, see himself in a dream walking through crowded streets in the nude and feel no shame or embarrassment. Later in the dream he may stumble over a stick lying on the sidewalk or do something equally innocuous and be "covered with con-

fusion." Or he may feel no emotion in a dream in which a dear friend drops dead at his feet and yet be overwhelmed with sorrow when he discovers that a moth has eaten a hole in his clothing. In both cases there is a displacement of the emotion which serves to hide the real significance of the dream and rob it of its disturbing elements.

Other mechanisms are also used to distort dreams, but enough has been said to indicate that the dream is more than the nonsensical conglomeration of incoherent images it seems to be. It serves as an outlet for frustrated needs. The fact that most dreams are not long remembered is an indication of their origin. Many of them are forgotten the moment we awake. You know that you dreamed during the night and that the dream was very vivid, but somehow you cannot recall it. Even in its disguised form, the dream is unwelcome to the ego, and memory of it is promptly blotted out.

A very confusing feature of dreams is that they do not follow the laws of logical thought, which we employ in our ordinary thinking. The logical cause-and-effect relationship is almost entirely absent, and inconsistencies and contradictions appear. Oddly enough, while you are dreaming, these inconsistencies do not impress you. You may dream about a person who has been dead for a long time, and though you may vaguely realize that you are dreaming and that this experience cannot be real, you react as though it were. One person may appear as two different people in the dream without causing any alarm; individuals suddenly appear and disappear; a person in the dream may lose his legs one moment and have them back again in another. The most improbable events are, in dreams, accepted as a matter of course. In the broad light of day, these inconsistencies seem ridiculous and absurd and entirely foreign to any known way of thinking. Nevertheless, they closely resemble the thought processes found in early childhood and among

primitive peoples. As we grow older and more and more emphasis is placed upon logical and consistent habits of thought, these early forms are abandoned and only reappear under special circumstances.

¶ *The origin of neurotic symptoms is similar to that of dreams.*

An understanding of the mechanisms underlying dream formation is essential to an understanding of neurotic symptoms. Not only do both arise from frustrated needs, but both use, in large measure, the same mechanisms. Like the dream, the neurotic symptom represents the return of repressed wishes in disguised form. Like the dream, it represents a compromise between the repressed and repressing forces, although here we may see the compromise in a clearer form. In extreme clinical cases neurotic symptoms may take the form of temporary deafness, blindness, stuttering, and other physical disabilities which disappear when the individual's repressed needs are gratified.

¶ *Compulsions are a common form of neurotic symptom.*

Another group of neurotic disorders is called *compulsions*. Individuals are compelled to carry out all sorts of acts against their "will." Most of us have little compulsions. We see them every day in people who must walk on the curbstone, people who must not step on the lines in the sidewalk, people who have to try the door several times to be sure it is locked, people who have to go through all sorts of mannerisms before they can do some minor task. There is, in fact, a great variety of compulsions ranging from little jerks of the body to very complex forms of ritual. Most compulsions are not alarming, but still they can be unpleasant and exceedingly mystifying. We experience a form of compulsion when a



tune persists in running through our minds and nothing we can do will stop it. The harder we try to rid ourselves of it, the more persistent it becomes.

§ *Reaction formations are frequently used as a form of defense against repressed desires.*

In seeking to strengthen early repressions we often make use of an interesting mechanism known as *reaction formation*. A reaction formation is carried through by repressing what is considered an unsocial or dangerous goal and then unconsciously placing a higher value on the opposite goal and striving for it instead. It is as if the individual were trying to convince himself that the original desire could not possibly exist, or if it did exist it was not worth having. One of the most common forms of reaction formation is found in connection with toilet activities. Children do not naturally experience disgust at the sight, smell, or touch of feces. Many children, in fact, enjoy playing with this substance. Our culture, however, places a severe taboo on such behavior. Many mothers are horrified when they discover their children engaged in such play. The children are frequently punished, made to feel that they are horrible creatures, and threatened with the loss of the mother's love. A severe conflict may be developed in this way.

Usually the desire for the prohibited activity continues to exist in the unconscious and produces anxiety reactions whenever it threatens to become conscious. In order to reduce his anxiety and bolster his defenses against the forbidden activity the individual exaggerates the value of the opposite kind of behavior. He then becomes unusually orderly, clean, neat, and punctual in every detail of living. The slightest sign of disorder brings on an attack of anxiety similar to that which he first experienced when the mother threatened him with a loss of love for playing with his ex-

cretions. By accentuating the opposite type of behavior he tries to diminish the value of the original impulse and at the same time to strengthen the repressing forces and safeguard himself from the feared deprivation of losing the mother's love. It is as though he were trying to say, "Now you can love me more and more for see how clean and neat I really am."

Reaction formations can usually be detected by the anxiety that develops when the individual is hindered in his behavior. Furthermore, the repression in these cases is never complete, and the prohibited desire always manages to obtain some gratification in a disguised way.

Such phenomena as slips of the tongue, errors in reading and writing, mistakes in seeing, dreams, neurotic symptoms, compulsions, and reaction formations are only a few of the many ways in which repressed material returns. Its expression is always disguised or camouflaged to such a degree that we are not aware of the hidden significance. In order to conceal the true meaning of our behavior even more effectively, we usually hide behind an elaborate system of rationalizations. In this way we succeed in fooling ourselves concerning the motivations of our irrational behavior and often go so far that we convince ourselves that the behavior is really a virtue rather than a weakness.

We may delude ourselves by these tactics, but we do not always succeed in deluding others. In defending ourselves too vehemently we betray ourselves. When an individual reacts out of proportion to the occasion—when a friend, for example, flies into a rage over a minor omission—we may be sure that the incident has unconscious significance. This is one of his tender spots. His repressions at this point are none too adequate. He must bring other forces into play to maintain them. The things in ourselves that we fear the most are the things we react to most violently in the external world. The little things we do that bring with them a sense of guilt

have touched off some unconscious longing. Situations in which we feel inadequate, worthless, or inferior likewise reveal the tender spots in our make-up. We are fighting shadows of our childhood which we must learn to face and accept as part of ourselves. We must learn to distinguish between the necessary restrictions which the culture places on certain forms of need expression and the unnecessary restrictions we have placed upon ourselves through a misunderstanding of what the prohibition really implied. Only when we have done this can we live the fullest life possible within the framework of our culture.

§ *Irregularities in the super-ego structure sometimes prevent the acceptance of the cultural pattern.*

Our considerations thus far have all been confined to people who were striving to keep their conduct in conformity with the patterns of the culture. It is true that sometimes their efforts did not meet with complete success. Some were forced to run away from their present environments; others were forced to hide behind camouflaging activities; whereas others developed neurotic symptoms that interfered with their attempts to lead a worth-while life. But all of them had, in the course of their development, made identifications that contributed to a super-ego which was roughly in harmony with the culture. Although this is the desirable outcome, from the social point of view, it is not taken by all individuals. Many variations and anomalies or irregularities in super-ego structure are possible.

In order to achieve the maximum self-realization possible under any given circumstances, the individual must be able to establish a balanced relationship between the expression and gratification of his needs, his super-ego, and the environment. He is then in a position to direct most of his energies

to socially valued goals and to derive the full benefit of the culture. Through belonging to a culture civilized man is freed from constant demands to seek gratification for his physical needs as primitive man was forced to do. The energy originally devoted to these ends can now be redirected into activities such as art, music, science, and social enterprises that advance the culture. The culture, thereby, pays rich returns for the frustrations and restrictions it imposes, provided the individual has been able to accept the cultural pattern as his own inner guide.

Unhappily, not all people accept the cultural pattern. As we have seen, a great many factors in the child's life may interfere with the development of a balanced super-ego and prevent the individual from enjoying these benefits to the fullest extent. Sometimes the parent with whom the child identifies does not adhere to the cultural pattern. The individual's inner standards do not, then, agree with the outer cultural demands. The super-ego is defective in certain respects and allows the individual to participate in activities upon which the culture frowns. The result is that he may run afoul of the culture and be subjected to outer punishments. Even if this is not the case, the lack of harmony between inner standards and outer requirements may develop in him a fear of punishment, a feeling of continuous frustration accompanied by feelings of hostility.

In other cases the super-ego may be in harmony with the cultural demands but have an insufficient amount of energy at its disposal to enforce its judgments. Here the fear of outer punishment may reinforce the super-ego and succeed in restraining the individual from unsocial actions. But this will not be the free and easy restraint we find in persons in whom the super-ego is well balanced. There is always a discrepancy between what the individual would like to do and what he ought to do. When the possibilities of detection are

slight, this individual will find it difficult to control his need expressions and keep them in harmony with the accepted standards.

Then, too, the super-ego may be overbalanced in the other direction. Instead of too little energy being turned inward against the ego, we find that too much is being used in this way. The super-ego becomes ultrasocial in its demands. It regards the expression of primary needs as dangerous and inhibits their free expression to the point where the individual's sphere of activity is limited. The individual becomes cramped in his actions through fear of super-ego punishment. These are the cases in which excessive feelings of anxiety, inferiority, and guilt are prevalent. They form a large percentage of the neurotic population of our culture. They spend their energies trying to live up to the letter of cultural demands as they unconsciously conceive them and have little left for a broad, culturally rich life.

Still other difficulties may arise in connection with super-ego development. Thus far we have spoken of the super-ego as though its nucleus was always based on an identification with the parents. This is the ideal case. When this takes place, the individual follows, more or less closely, the cultural pattern of his family. The super-ego becomes the carrier of the culture—the conservative element of his personality.

There are times, however, when an identification with the parents does not take place. For one reason or another the child identifies with a person outside the immediate family. In such cases we usually find a decided divergence from the family pattern and frequently from the cultural pattern as well.

In instances where parents are too busy with their own affairs, they cannot give their child the love, affection, and understanding that he needs to resolve his early conflicts

through an identification with the parent image. Parents, in the child's eyes, represent persons who continually make demands and impose prohibitions, but give nothing in return. Unable to dispose of his strong resentment toward his parents, he may turn to another adult, perhaps a relative who is the opposite of his father. Suppose this man is likable, kind, generous, and easy-going. He has time for everything and takes a deep interest in the boy's activities. To the child he seems to be just the kind of person one's father should be. He offers the child gratifications that he has not received at home and thereby gives him some security in an otherwise inhospitable world. That his relative may be of questionable character, of course, never enters his young head.

To further his security the child identifies with his relative and builds a super-ego on his image which is contrary to the pattern of his father. As he grows older, he begins to associate with boys who resemble the friends of his relative and, in general, adopts the relative's behavior, attitudes, and ideals as his own. As time passes, these patterns become more and more firmly entrenched in his personality. But his associations and behavior do not meet the approval of his parents, nor do they conform to the standards set by the culture. Often the pattern is too deeply rooted to be attacked by any methods the parents may use. As a matter of fact, he may derive considerable satisfaction from the home situation. Not only is he now able to reject his parents as he feels that they rejected him in childhood, but he receives a show of love, affection, and concern which he has long desired but could not win in any other way. Furthermore, by doing violence to his father's ideals and hopes he is expressing some of the resentment he has always felt.

Consider the boy whose parents are overattentive and lavish in their show of affection and pride. Every wish expressed by the child is granted; every new toy finds its way

to his playroom. The parents are willing to give the child everything that money can buy. But perhaps the child has a strong need for love. It is ungratified by the parents' gifts; yet material things are the only signs of affection he recognizes in his childhood. The material objects may thus become symbols for the affection he craves, and in extreme cases the child may be unable to resist the temptation to steal. At first he indulges in petty thefts—an apple or two from the grocer. But the things he steals are only symbols of the things he wants and thus are never completely satisfying. What is more, his petty thievery may become a thrilling game in which each success makes him a little bit bolder. Soon the game of stealing involves lying to cover his thefts. In later years he may become a confirmed thief, to the distress of his well-meaning and probably highly moral parents. Naturally, the individual could not know what he was really trying to accomplish through his unsocial behavior. The thought of being unloved was too painful to enter consciousness in an undisguised form. It could, however, be tolerated symbolically under the guise of material objects. The result was that when he felt himself to be unloved, he experienced it as a desire for more objects which he then stole from others. Here, too, the early resentment against the parents for the deprivation found an outlet, insofar as his behavior violated his parents' most cherished ideals and hopes and impaired their reputation.

Such reactions are not uncommon in our culture. In prizing material success so highly we often lost the happiness we might have obtained from a warm emotional relationship with our children. It may even be that our cultural emphasis on the acquisition of material objects may be a substitute form of gratification for deeper and more fundamental needs. In order to compensate for our own ungratified love needs of childhood, we strive for these symbolic substitutes

which never bring us the satisfaction we really want. The unfortunate part is that in striving for these fictitious goals we fail to recognize and satisfy the same need in our children. The result is that our children are likewise deprived of this need gratification, and they are then forced to seek their security in the same symbolic substitutes their parents strive for. And so particular forms of deprivation may be passed on from one generation to the next, together with their substitute patterns. In the course of generations these substitutes may become firmly imbedded in the cultural value-system.

¶ *Some forms of delinquency and criminality result from an absence of a super-ego function.*

This problem is of the utmost importance when applied to our poverty-stricken areas where material deprivations are common. Here many people are forced to work long hours in order to get the bare necessities of life. Frequently both father and mother must find employment in order to eke out an existence. Often, under these circumstances the children are regarded as additional burdens—more mouths to feed and, consequently, increased deprivation on the part of the parents. Many of the children are psychologically rejected before they are born. Every demand they make upon their parents is resented. One frustration after another is imposed upon them. Little wonder that many of these children develop excessive retaliation which becomes directed toward all persons in authority and against the entire social order.

The benefits which the culture is able to give remain unrecognized to persons who feel rejected. Love and affection were absent in their childhood and in their home life, and what little they may have experienced from other sources is buried beneath a deep hatred. In many of them a real



super-ego function is lacking. Without some gratification of their need for love, they lack the force to bind these destructive tendencies and turn them inward against the ego. Sublimation of unsocial tendencies is, therefore, absent, and these individuals live a life in which physical need demands seem all important.

Nevertheless, such individuals continually strive for an adequate love relationship that will satisfy their unconscious yearning. In many cases, however, the early frustration was so severe that they cannot face its demands on a conscious level. Every relationship that bears the mark of real love is unconsciously regarded as dangerous and awakens the fear of being rejected again, as they were in their infancy.

Some of these individuals become criminals. The hatred they had for their parents in childhood is carried over to the entire social order in adulthood. Unconsciously they are driven to destroy the society that has imposed the frustrations upon them and denied them the gratification of fundamental needs. And yet our legal system blames these individuals for their conduct. Built upon the theory that man is a purely rational creature who can "will" his behavior in accordance with the mandates of society, the law punishes the individual for his shortcomings by putting him in prison and often maltreating him. This, it is believed, will act as a deterrent and help him to guide his future behavior in more suitable channels. From the point of view of the individual, society is imposing still more frustrations and deprivations. The very things that he is unconsciously fighting against are administered in greater measure. The result is that an even stronger need for retaliation is aroused to strengthen tendencies that society is trying to curb. It is not astonishing, therefore, to find that many criminals are more ruthless after they have served a term in prison.

Often one finds that a child may feel that he is being rejected even when, in reality, he is not. The results in the two cases are very often the same. The child then seeks some other person with whom he can identify and whose image will give him an increased sense of security. Frequently, in our slum areas, the person chosen may be a criminal, gangster, or racketeer whose gaudiness, extravagance, and easy-going attitude appeal to the frustrated child. He seems to have so much that is desirable, in the eyes of the deprived child, that his own parents suffer by comparison. The result may be that the child takes such an individual as a model instead of his parents and then unconsciously strives for the unsocial goals which, in his childhood, seemed so rewarding. Such an individual becomes a real social problem.

¶ *The super-ego is usually based on a composite of identifications.*

As we have said, the child usually identifies, in varying degrees, with the characteristics of both parents, depending upon the circumstances. The result is that the ego-ideal is a composite of the parent images. In organizing his personality and resolving infantile conflicts, the individual identifies with the characteristics he believes will bring the greatest gratifications and at the same time give the security he desires. In the majority of cases the most feasible way seems to be through an identification predominantly with the parent of the same sex, but there may be many variations.

Not infrequently it happens that the identifications with the parents are of almost equal strength, and although the individual may consciously choose to emphasize one or the other, he finds difficulty in making an adequate adjustment. Unconsciously there is a confusion of rôles, and he can never be certain which of the two he should assume. This con-

fusion would be detrimental enough if it were confined solely to love relationships where it finds fullest expression, but unfortunately it is carried over into other activities that are only remotely symbolic. The individual becomes indecisive in his actions and insecure in his social contacts, or he may vacillate from one rôle to another without ever being able to throw himself whole-heartedly into either of them. Although such an attitude is most common during adolescence when a reorganization of the personality is taking place, it often endures into later life.

Finding the proper rôle with which he can identify and make an adequate social adjustment, and at the same time have inner security, is difficult for the young child in our culture. In our modern industrial civilization the father may not be the sole provider nor the mother the person who takes care of the home. Today men and women work next to each other in business and in the professions. Mothers frequently devote a large part of their time to careers and regard the home as a part-time job. In many cases the mother is the more successful of the two parents and in the days of the depression not infrequently became the sole provider of the family. Under these circumstances, the father may stay at home and take care of the house and children which results in a complete reversal in the rôles which our culture has tried to develop.

In other fields of activity the distinction between the sexes is also rapidly disappearing. Girls and boys participate in many of the same sports and forms of play. They attend the same schools and have the same demands made upon them. Even in boys' and girls' play clothes there is comparatively little distinction. All of this makes it difficult for the child to know exactly where he fits into the picture or what is expected of him in the future. Undoubtedly the adjustment of a child to a culture in which the masculine and feminine

rôles are more clearly defined is easier than it is in our own.

To these more general cultural difficulties the increasing number of divorces must also be added. Not only are children frequently exposed to a home environment full of frictions and resentments but also to one in which love is absent. Under these circumstances the home lacks the stability that is required by the child in making an adequate adjustment and finding security in his social environment. When the divorce is granted, the child is usually taken to live with one parent and has only a relatively slight contact with the other. Such an environment must, of necessity, lead to a one-sided development that makes a normal, social adjustment extremely difficult to attain. Here, of course, the confusion in rôles and subsequent identifications is greatest since one parent is forced to play both rôles at the same time. One parent becomes the object of too many conflicting desires that cannot be solved on an adequate bisexual basis. It is not surprising that many children brought up in such an environment develop into adults who are emotionally unstable and insecure. Fortunately many of them go outside the immediate home in making their major identifications and succeed in organizing their personalities on a wholesome foundation.

Rapid changes in the cultural pattern also add to the difficulties of making a suitable adjustment. To the adult every new pattern means a collision with his ego-ideal and a consequent feeling of insecurity until the two can again be brought into harmony with each other. The cultural "lag" or resistance to change that is so obvious in radical attempts to alter the accepted ways of doing things has its roots in this incompatibility between inner and outer patterns. On an intellectual level we may be in favor of cultural progress, but unconsciously we cling to the ways that offered us security in our childhood. Any divergence from these is regarded, in the

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unconscious, as dangerous to our future welfare. We must gradually feel our way into new patterns and cover our resistance against them with high-sounding rationalizations while we do so. The more inner security an individual has, the more ready he will be to accept new patterns which, on an intellectual level, hold promise of future returns. But most of us are not in this enviable position. When changes are proposed, we are filled with inappropriate emotions that distort our evaluation of the proposals on a purely merit basis. Logical arguments are ineffective in the face of these inner fears. The latter blind us to the advantages we might gain through a more flexible form of adaptation.

# 13

## WE LOOK BACK

### § *Factors that go into personality development.*

THERE is no point in attempting to describe more and more forms of maladjustment. Every normal person has had some problems of adjustment. The way these problems are expressed is peculiar to the single individual. Each individual attempts to satisfy inner and outer demands in the way that seems to him to be the most feasible. Although in the abstract this explanation may seem very simple, the few maladjustments we have mentioned have demonstrated only too clearly how extremely complex the interaction between demands of the self and demands of the environment may be.

For the sake of simplicity we have confined ourselves to a consideration of a single child in a family in which both parents were present. Obviously the presence of other children in the home exerts a powerful influence on the development of the individual child—new bonds, new conflicts, new adjustments must be made. The nature of these will depend in large part upon the child's place in the family. If he is the oldest, he has to adjust to the arrival of one or more new children in the family. It will make a difference whether each new arrival is a boy or girl. If he is the youngest, he must from birth onwards adjust to at least three persons instead of two. Here, too, the sex of the older sibling will in-

fluence his development. Likewise, the absence of either one of the parents will change his emotional development.

Then, too, there are many hereditary factors which should be considered. The problem of adjustment is different for the large, strong, healthy individual and for the small, puny, and weak one. Inherent weaknesses in different organs or functions may further complicate the process of adaptation. And so we could go through a long list of factors that might influence the child's development. In order to understand a given individual's present adjustment, all of these factors, as well as many of his personal life experiences, would have to be considered.

We have, consequently, failed to give a complete picture of personality development. From the very nature of personality it would be impossible to do so. Each of us is a distinct and unique person, an individual. No two of us are born with exactly the same hereditary endowment; no two of us are subjected to identical conditions in the course of growing up; and no two of us are ever exposed to precisely the same experiences. The result is that no two personalities are ever identical. It is true that on the surface they may seem very much alike, but when we examine the respective courses by which they developed, we may find that they are entirely different.

Only the well-trained expert can read from the many details of a person's life history the full story of his personality development. What we have tried to do in this book is to confine our attention to a few of the more common determinants of personality structure so that the reader may have some understanding of and sympathy for others. A brief review of these may be helpful in coördinating our findings.

An examination of behavior revealed that we could not even understand the simplest actions without assuming that

some source of energy within the individual caused the various manifestations we could observe. This hypothetical source of energy we called a *need*. A further examination of behavior revealed that there must be a number of such needs and that we could identify them in terms of the goals toward which the behavior motivated by them was directed. The commonest and most potent were the primary physiological needs of the organism, for upon the gratification of these the actual survival of the organism depends.

The gratification of these primary needs in their infantile manner is not permitted to continue for very long. During the first weeks of life the culture begins to institute training designed to restrict their free expression and gratification. The culture demands that the child learn to tolerate the unpleasant feelings that accompany an increase in the underlying need tension, that he accept substitute objects for his gratification, and that he adopt new forms of behavior that fit into the cultural pattern. This process of socializing is very complicated and confusing to the infant who has, up to this time, scarcely an awareness of himself as something apart from his environment. This is the beginning of a long series of experiences which finally result in the child's having a conception of himself as a distinct psychological entity or self.

We found that the methods used in applying these cultural restrictions during infancy were all important in determining the later attitudes of the individual. These early experiences form the foundations of his future personality structure. If the training during this period is harsh, inconsistent, and coercive, the child regards his experiences as frustrations and reacts to them with anxiety and resentment. He tends to cling to the pleasures he has been able to find and refuses to accept substitute modes or objects of gratification. He views the rising need tension as painful and



carries this attitude over to other need tensions. In the end he becomes alarmed at the appearance of any strong need. It is as though he thought to himself, "Now that painful experience is about to happen again, and I must do everything possible to prevent it."

There are also indications that early training determines, to a considerable degree, the relative intensities of many of the psychogenic needs which become characteristics of the personality later on. The need for acquisition and the need for dominance seem to be intimately related to inadequate training in feeding, whereas the need for retention and such traits as orderliness, punctuality, and obstinacy seem to be associated with toilet training. In other cultures, in which different forms of child training are employed, the relative intensities of these psychogenic needs vary widely from what we find in a cross-section of our own culture.

There is also a variation in the need intensities of different individuals. Children whose early training is kind, consistent, and tolerant only rarely seem to possess these particular psychogenic need tensions to any marked degree. These children, on the whole, seem much more patient, coöperative, and tolerant. They soon learn that what seemed to be a frustration at first is no more than a restriction and that gratification will be supplied in due time. They view their environment with a friendly rather than with a hostile attitude. They feel secure in the protection, love, and understanding of their parents, and transition from one mode or object of gratification to another is relatively easy. Resentments are reduced to a minimum, and love and confidence replace the fear, suspicion, and hostility found in children whose early training was unsuitable.

In the course of growing up the child meets each new situation in terms of similar experiences in his past. If the new experience supports his expectations of what it will

be like, the determining view is reinforced. The next time a similar situation arises, he clings to his view with even greater conviction. And so our basic attitudes toward ourselves and the world around us are formed and promulgated. Each step in training the child to control the demands of the physiological needs is particularly important inasmuch as it strikes at the very root of the dynamics of behavior. The basic attitudes developed in the child toward his physiological needs are later carried over, automatically, to his psychogenic needs.

The fact that the psychogenic needs may not be innate, but derivatives of the physical needs, should not disturb us. We know from our study of need actions that when the main avenue to gratification is cut off by cultural prohibitions or circumstances in the environment, the energy flows into new channels which, owing to certain similar characteristics, offer a form of substitute gratification. The important thing to recognize is that the same laws can be applied to the energy finding expression in these substitute activities as were found in connection with the original activities. The situation is not unlike that of a dammed stream which overflows into new outlets. The water flowing in these newly created outlets behaves in exactly the same manner and is subject to the same laws as the water in the original river bed which pours over the spillway.

§ *Primary needs should be gratified when they appear.*

One more important fact should be mentioned. From the evidence available, there seems to be reason to believe that the child requires for a certain period of time in his development the pleasure derived from gratifying these primary physical needs before he can easily relinquish them in favor of cultural restrictions. If sufficient enjoyment is not

permitted, the child may accept the cultural restriction for the time being, but a strong tendency remains to return to the earlier level and again enjoy the pleasures that were denied him as a child. As he grows older, of course, such tendencies are severely repressed, and he is entirely unconscious of their existence. But, nevertheless, as we have seen, such desires continue to exist and to influence the individual's later behavior. It may be that those individuals who develop strong psychogenic needs, as a form of compensation, are those who, in their infancy, were subjected to severe deprivations. The compensatory activity, however, is no more than a parallel activity which resembles the original activity in some respects but is not interchangeable with it. It may be for this reason that many of the psychogenic needs show a fairly constant intensity and can never be completely gratified.

§ *Sublimation—a useful way of converting needs.*

The situation is entirely different in cases where considerable opportunity was granted the child to enjoy, without hindrance, the pleasures attending the gratification of these primary needs. As the child accepts the cultural restrictions, he is able to divert the energy into new channels by sublimation. This is quite different from the foregoing cases in which compensatory needs are initiated. In the case of sublimation, the repression is neither so severe nor so extensive. The sublimating activities may, therefore, be much more closely related to the original ones without arousing anxiety in the individual. Instead of damming the stream and forcing the need energy to find entirely new outlets, as in the foregoing case, only a redirection of the main stream is now necessary. The stream, so to speak, makes a detour or by-pass around the forbidden goal but continues as a whole toward the desired goal. When such a need is fused with others, it

becomes highly productive and yields far greater satisfactions to the individual.

Sublimations lie at the root of almost all of our great cultural achievements. The arts are particularly fertile in opportunities for expending energy of this kind, as well as the sciences and professions. Under suitable circumstances, sublimating activities may show an extraordinary degree of creativity and originality, as well as flexibility in their modes of expression. Of all the ways and means of using the energy of a blocked need, sublimation is the most fruitful, rewarding, and socially valuable.

From this very brief sketch of the effects of various forms of training on later personality characteristics, we can see how very complex is the relationship between an individual and his culture. How easily, at this period of life, the energy of fundamental needs may be diverted into other channels! And yet, how terribly important it is for the future of the individual to direct his needs into those channels which are going to bring him positive satisfactions. We have seen how, even in its barest outline, such training may determine fundamental emotional reactions to the individual himself as well as to his environment, and how these may persist and change his future attitudes. Let it be said at once that no individual ever passes through this period of life without receiving some "injury," some diversion from a "perfect adjustment."

#### § *Normality—a fiction.*

The creation of a "normal" individual borders on the impossible. We are all, during our infancy, in the care of human beings. Each of them has personal peculiarities and imperfections. Each, with the best intentions in the world, will make slips and mistakes in the course of our training that will have an effect upon our emotional development. Even

if a person set out to develop a perfectly "normal" child, it would be impossible to attain this end, for the child is almost never in the complete care of a single adult. Other persons move in the infant's environment—father, nurses, maids, aunts, and uncles. Each one influences the child's emotional life insofar as each introduces some variations, if not downright contradictions, into the child's training program. Each individual makes personal demands on the child, and each calls out specific reactions in return. Add to these the complications, competitions, and rivalries introduced by other children in the family. Every experience with them calls out some emotional reaction that leaves its mark on the child's future attitude and modifies his behavior.

¶ *The home is first in importance for personality development.*

The foundations of the individual's personality are laid in the home during these first years of his life. Whatever comes later is only superstructure—modifications and alterations. If we are really to understand the psychological make-up of an individual in later life, it is absolutely essential that we delve into the secrets of his early period. Here we will find his fundamental attitude toward the world and people in it, as well as his attitude toward his own need demands and his methods of dealing with them. Unfortunately, these secrets are not easy to discover. Owing to the repressions that result from later conflicts, many of the most significant memories of this early period are, to all intents and purposes, lost to the individual. Under ordinary circumstances, few of us can consciously remember anything more than isolated fragments of our life experiences before the age of three or four years. It is only by the application of special techniques and in unusual circumstances that some of these

early repressions can be lifted sufficiently to give us a glimpse of what actually happened in these important days.

But even if we had complete knowledge of an individual's experiences during this period, it would still be insufficient for a complete understanding of his later behavior. In the course of growing up, as we have seen, the child is carried into emotional conflicts within himself. He reaches the point where the same person becomes the goal of opposing needs. To gratify one of these needs means to deny the other. He must choose between them and find new outlets of expression for the incompatible need. In the majority of cases, the incompatible needs are redirected through identification in such a way that the ego of the child himself becomes their object. The needs thus become inhibiting forces that check the free expression of other needs incompatible with the image of the person with whom the child has identified himself. The result is that in the future the child must cope with an internal authority of his own, as well as external authorities which the culture imposes upon him.

It will make a tremendous difference in the life and conduct of the individual whether the super-ego function created in this way makes excessive demands upon his ego and inflicts severe punishments in the form of qualms of conscience, or is lenient in its judgments or even completely undemanding. It will also make a difference in the psychological make-up of the individual whether he has preferred to make his primary identification with his mother rather than with his father or rejected both parents and taken a model outside the family circle.

§ *Other powerful influences on personality lie in experiences outside the home.*

The many personal experiences outside the home may exert a powerful influence upon his evolving personality. His

school career, in particular, will be important. What kind of persons are his teachers, what type of education, and what relations with other children will he have? Each of these experiences will bring about certain modifications in his evolving personality. Each will leave its tiny mark, for better or for worse, upon his future. Each of us is the product of an almost infinite number of experiences that are distinctly personal. No two of us ever tread the same path, and no two of us ever reach the same end. The more similar the paths are—as, for example, individuals growing up in the same cultural group and subjected to similar training, methods, and educational techniques—the more similar will the personalities be. This, of course, is what we find in everyday life. Within our own cultural group, we feel at home. We may be different from every other individual in the group, but we are not so different that we feel completely strange as we may in the presence of some one who has had entirely different life experiences. These similarities forge a bond between the individual members that holds the group together and makes it a unit with a life of its own. In defending the values, ideals, and customs of our group we are, therefore, defending, to some degree, our own personality structure.

But there are relatively few individuals in any group, however large, with super-ego standards that harmonize completely with those of the group. There are even fewer whose training and experiences are such that their super-ego standards are entirely in harmony with their need demands. The result is that there is always a discrepancy between what the individual would like to do and what his super-ego permits him to do and what the social group approves of his doing. In some cases, this discrepancy is not large, and the individual is able to move with a sense of freedom, security, and confidence in his relations with other

members of the group. He is a truly social person and is able to reap the full benefits which the culture provides in return for the restrictions and frustrations it imposes upon the primary needs of the individual in order to make group living possible.

In the majority of cases, however, this high degree of adaptation is not reached. The underlying needs continually make demands on the ego that are not compatible with the ideals of the super-ego or the standards of the group, or both. Owing to inadequacies in the individual's early development, the energy inherent in these needs has not been satisfactorily diverted into channels that meet with the approval of the inhibiting agencies. The individual feels constrained. If the greatest discrepancy lies between his need demands and the mores of his culture, he comes to regard the culture as a frustrating agent. Resentments and antagonisms develop which find an outlet in hostilities directed toward the social order. He cries for more and more freedom, and fewer and fewer prohibitions. Many persons of this kind, who feel the demands of the culture pressing in upon them, advocate throwing all cultural restrictions into the discard and returning to the "simple and natural" life.

§ *The super-ego and the culture—do they clash or harmonize?*

Such theories and proposals frequently find favor. They are built upon a distorted picture of the rôle the culture plays in their own lives. Culture, when regarded from one point of view, is certainly a restricting agency insofar as certain tendencies are denied their free and natural form of expression. From another standpoint, however, the culture has enabled man to achieve his present greatness in the world of nature. Not only do the restriction and routinization of



physical need gratification save man endless time and trouble, but by limiting the energy that would flow into these channels under primitive conditions, some of it flows into new outlets that offer opportunities for a fuller and richer form of satisfaction. Man is not unlike a fine fruit tree in this respect. Left to itself, a fruit tree wastes its energies growing wild wood which bears a small amount of inferior fruit. In order to enable the tree to reach the peak of its productive capacity, it is necessary to start very early and prune the tree in a careful manner. Under these circumstances, the energy, which in a natural state would be wasted, is guided into the accepted outlets where it produces large quantities of superior fruit. With man the fundamental difficulty is usually found in the methods used in imposing the cultural restrictions rather than in the restrictions themselves.

The case is different with those persons in whom the greatest discrepancy is to be found between the need demands and the super-ego requirements. Only too often do we find that the super-ego of such persons far exceeds even the extreme demands of the culture. These persons are, in a sense, oversocialized. Many of their needs are choked before they can reach the level of consciousness. The ego in such persons is hemmed in by internal prohibitions. In order to maintain its integrity, the ego must defend itself against its unwelcome need demands by a complicated system of defenses. Sometimes an idea is isolated from its emotional content, and either one or the other, or both, may be denied entry into the field of awareness. Or they may then be projected into the outer world to which the individual then reacts. Or they may be inverted or distorted in order to conceal their true significance and avoid super-ego disapproval. When they fail to do this, the ego experiences feel-

ings of anxiety, inferiority, guilt, remorse, or shame. When the ego's defenses are relatively weak and threaten to give way in the face of the need demands and the possibilities of gratifying them in the environment, it may resort to various types of escape mechanisms. It may remove the individual from the tempting environment, submerge itself in work or other forms of activity, render itself insensitive to its own internal dangers through the use of drugs or intoxicating liquors, or adopt a number of other techniques designed to evade meeting its own need-demands in an adult way.

Such individuals are, in a way, overpruned. Their ego may become so limited in its activities that it rarely has an opportunity to bear fruit. It is true that occasionally an individual of this type finds an outlet that serves his purposes without arousing super-ego disapproval or cultural prohibitions. In such cases, tremendous quantities of energy may be expended which drive the individual on to great achievements. If the activity is culturally prized, the individual may, through concentration on the one outlet, become a great artist or scientist. Only too often, however, such an individual pays for his great achievements by being forced to live a lopsided life, shut off from intimate relationships with his fellows.

.But most people who are overly severe with themselves are not even that fortunate. They spend fear-ridden lives—unproductive and unrewarding. Many of them are emotionally undernourished. They cry out for human companionship and understanding only to find themselves walled in when they meet it. Their lives are spent in a struggle with dark and mysterious tendencies—residues of an inadequate and detrimental childhood. Unhappily, they wander through life chasing the pot of gold at the bottom of ever-recurring rainbows.

¶ *Good balance may be good adjustment.*

The "well-adjusted" people in our society are those who have struck a sort of balance. They observe the niceties of life but do not go to extremes. They enjoy being "human." They know that they cannot be perfect, and do not expect to be. Instead of using a large portion of energy worrying about the past and the future, they spend their energy in work, play, fun, and affection. Buoyant and fearless, they look forward to their tomorrows because they have learned to accept their yesterdays.

# 14

## WE LOOK AHEAD

§ *What are we to do about adjustment problems?*

THE problem now arises: If we, in the course of our development, have acquired attitudes and reaction patterns that interfere with our happiness and adjustment, what are we to do about them? According to our study, it seems that we are what we are because we have been what we have been—we are products of our own past. In attempting to maintain our own integrity, we have repressed the memories of the unpleasant circumstances that lie at the root of our difficulties. They are no longer accessible to consciousness and, consequently, cannot be brought directly under rational control. Must we, therefore, go on for the remainder of our lives repeating unsuitable patterns of behavior, fighting tendencies that fill us with inappropriate emotions, wasting our energies in useless struggles or running away from threatening situations?

The answer is definitely "No!" Modern psychology has now progressed to the stage where a great many forms of even very serious maladjustment can be helped. Persons suffering from various kinds of compulsions, obsessions, neurotic symptoms, character disturbances, and excessive feelings of inferiority, anxiety, and guilt can be relieved of these symptoms and helped to a more satisfactory adjustment to life and its problems. Individuals in whom there are

strong unsocial impulses can, likewise, be helped to a more social way of living. And those whose problems of adjustment are not so serious can certainly be helped by understanding guidance.

The methods by which maladjustments can be relieved do not, however, consist in turning more energies inward or in adding further repressions to an already overburdened ego. On the contrary, they seek to free the ego of its burdens and allow it to direct some of the wasted and troublesome energies into new and more profitable channels. Even extreme cases of maladjustment are able to redirect their energies and make a new adjustment that falls well within the limits of what we ordinarily speak of as "normal."

To bring about such a readjustment is not easy. And it is definitely not the task of amateurs who often try to argue people out of their difficulties. Logical arguments, designed to convince the individual of the futility of his present adjustment, are next to useless. The individual himself is usually only too well aware of this fact and has probably exhausted every means at his command to combat these very tendencies. Short courses in "How to Develop Your Personality," "How to Develop Will Power," or "How to Become Master of Your Destiny," are likewise useless. They raise false hopes in the individual which may help him to suppress his unwelcome tendencies temporarily, but they almost never meet with permanent success. When they do, it is only at the cost of diverting more energies from useful living, and turning them inward to maintain new repressions. What the individual gains at one end, he loses at the other.

We must remember that maladjustments are the product of years of living and do not suddenly spring into being, even though this may often appear to be the case. The ego chooses the course of action which in the light of its acquired

knowledge and past experiences with similar conditions seems the most feasible under the prevailing circumstances.

The ego is the function that deals directly with reality. The safety and well-being of the organism, present as well as future, are in its hands. As we have seen, its task is not an easy one. On one side the needs are continually pressing the ego to initiate behavior that will result in their expression and gratification. These demands are, in themselves, irrational. Immediate gratification, quite irrespective of other consequences, is their fundamental demand. On the other side, however, lies the environment that not only offers resistance to the immediate gratification of some of the needs but also reciprocates by making demands on the individual. A complicated interaction of forces takes place. New needs are called into play that conflict with and oppose the immediate gratification of other needs. It is the job of the ego to arbitrate between these opposing demands. At this point, intelligence and reason begin to play an important rôle. By grasping the significance of various elements in the situation and their interrelationships, the ego is able to weave the reactions of the organism into the environment in such a way that various needs find partial gratification without running into the many dangers to be found there. Rational thinking is of tremendous importance in carrying out this task effectively. The ego, under normal circumstances, is quite able to perform this task, provided its grasp of the situation is sound to begin with. If, as so often happens, it has not grasped the true relationship existing between various elements, or projects a false view upon the facts, its judgments will be false and its future behavior inappropriate to the external circumstances which it seeks to master.

- The situation is complicated still further by the creation of a super-ego which the ego accepted as a pilot to guide it

through the difficult and unknown waters ahead. The selection and acceptance of the super-ego was not, however, based on rational consideration. It was, in fact, determined almost wholly on an irrational basis—the outcome of dire necessity. But having accepted the super-ego as a guide, the ego must, in the future, abide by its judgments. These judgments are often not in keeping with the need demands of the individual or the outer reality in which gratification may be obtained. The ego must, consequently, arbitrate still further and seek to bring these three divergent forces—the need demands of the organism, the requirements of the environment, and the mandates of the super-ego—into harmonious relationship.

§ *Readjustment depends on deep understanding of significant factors.*

It follows that as long as the situation remains the same, only a deeper understanding of these divergent forces can bring about an alteration in the ego's reaction. Education strives to provide the individual with such an understanding of his environment—particularly, his physical environment. Facts of all sorts concerning the nature and action of his physical environment are poured into the individual. Skills and techniques of manipulating the environment are developed which enable him to attain new and fuller forms of expression in this area.

Less attention is paid to the study of the social environment in which the individual must live. This important area, which offers so many rich opportunities for need expression and gratification, has been sadly neglected. Our education in social fields has been limited by a moralistic approach that hinders rather than aids the adjustment of the age. We have been all too prone to teach children that "people *do* this and *do not* do that," in order to persuade

them to fit themselves into accepted cultural patterns. The fact is that people do not usually behave in this manner although it might be culturally desirable for them to do so. No one is "perfect." In teaching children, it might be well to emphasize that people *ought not* to behave in this or that manner, rather than to give the impression that they *do not*, and vice versa. By giving this false impression of human perfection, the ego, which is struggling to control the unsocial demands made upon it, is made to feel incompetent and inferior in comparison with others. This feeling only adds to its already great burdens and broadens the cleavage between the ego and the need demands it is designed to control. The result is an intolerance of its own desires, tendencies, and impulses.

But even a detailed education about the outer social world would not be sufficient to bring about radical alteration in the ego's adjustment to reality. This is only half of the story. As we have seen, there is an internal authority which also plays an important rôle in determining the goals toward which the ego is permitted to direct its efforts in seeking need gratifications, as well as the modes of expression it may utilize. Before the ego can modify its reactions in this respect, it must understand the origin of this inhibitory function. The conflicts that led to its creation must be reviewed in the light of present knowledge and experience in order that the ego may have the opportunity of correcting the fallacies in its earlier judgments. In a sense, the ego must re-live its development.

Furthermore, if the ego is to do its job adequately, it must have a detailed knowledge of its own needs. It must understand the unconscious goals toward which these needs are striving, and the influences which deflected them from their earlier course into new channels. It must also understand its own attitudes toward these needs and the defense mecha-



nisms which it has used in warding off undesirable impulses or desires arising from them. The entire history of the individual's experiences with need tensions must, therefore, be examined and brought into relation with the ego's present mode of reacting both in relation to the super-ego and to the external environment. The mature ego may make use of such an understanding in order to displace its infantile fears and behavior patterns by a new and more satisfactory adjustment to the culture. It is able to synthesize much of the unconscious material into a new integration and bring many irrational tendencies and emotions under unconscious rational control.

Such a detailed case study of an individual is clearly a major undertaking and is only warranted when the maladjustment is severe enough to interfere with the individual's efforts to live a happy and useful life. Many of the cases that come to the notice of the psychologist fall in this category. Individuals are wasting their lives fighting bogies of their infancy. Everyday living is made miserable by unconscious phantoms with which they never come to grips. Wholesome relationships with other people are very difficult for them, and they are often destined to fight their battles alone—unloved and misunderstood. Life to some of them becomes a burden too heavy to bear. These extreme cases are often used for illustration because in psychology, as in medicine, we can frequently learn more about the normal functioning of the organism from effects of disease than we can from healthy functioning. The mind, like the body, is more or less self-regulatory and tends to correct a state of disequilibrium or maladjustment in one of its functions by compensating through others. These compensatory measures often give us insight into the operation of the whole in a normal state.

§ *"All the world's a bit queer."*

Most of us, fortunately, are not afflicted with severe maladjustments. But we all have our quirks and problems. We all have habits, attitudes, desires, and emotions which trouble us and of which we would like to be rid. Some are only slightly annoying, whereas others are disturbing. You may have struggled against some of them without success and wondered why they clung so tenaciously to you when other people seemed to be free of them, or to control them without difficulty. Perhaps you have condemned yourself for lacking will power, or felt that you were weak and inferior because of your inability to guide your behavior into channels you believed to be right, good, or proper. Or there may have been difficulties that prevented you from concentrating or working efficiently. Perhaps you want to master something, but somehow you cannot keep your attention on the task in hand or muster the necessary energy to carry it through to fruition. Or it may be that you feel shut off from other people. You would like to come in really close contact with them, but somehow you are unable to do it in spite of your best efforts. You may fail to become popular in your group or to be accepted whole-heartedly as one of its members. Or it may be that you can never give yourself over to the situation as you feel you should. You would like to let go and just be your natural self, but something inside always seems to hold you back and prevent you from doing so. Whenever you try, you become all tied up within yourself. Instead of letting go, you are overcome with feelings of embarrassment, awkwardness, or shame. You feel sure that others would be offended by your actions or laugh at your efforts. Or it may be that when you try to tell people how you really feel, you find the words sticking in your throat. Instead of speaking openly, you stutter or stammer and are unable to go on. Or

you may feel suspicious of other people. In spite of your better judgment, you have the feeling that others cannot be trusted or that they are only friendly for what they can get out of you. The result is that, against your own wishes, you find yourself on the defensive and only too ready to accept evidence which might indicate that your friends are unfaithful or insincere.

Or perhaps you are dissatisfied with your adjustment to the opposite sex. You may feel quite at home with members of your own sex and thoroughly enjoy their company. As soon as a member of the opposite sex arrives, however, you find yourself drawing back into a shell. You feel constrained and uncomfortable and can think of nothing whatever to say, and your movements become awkward. In consequence, you may avoid dances or dates or any occasion that brings you in close contact with the other sex. Or it may be that you would like to participate in sports, but find yourself unable to do so because you are overcome with the fear of injury. Or you may be a poor loser and feel that it is better not to compete at all than to lose and appear before others as a bad sport.

These are only a few examples of the many minor maladjustments that disturb people and interfere with their happiness and success. To an outsider they may appear quite insignificant. It may seem that the individual is making a mountain out of a mole hill and that he should be able to dismiss them from his mind. But to the individual who is afflicted by such disturbances, they may appear as real mountains. For him they are of the utmost importance, and he may spend endless time and energy in attempting to overcome them. Only too often his best efforts are doomed to failure, and he is destined to indulge in self-condemnation, discouragement, or self-pity. To make his problem worse, he may be harangued by his parents, teachers, or associates

who, failing to understand the nature of the difficulty, believe that he is not trying to overcome it. Such external disapproval only adds to his feeling of confusion, incompetency, and unworthiness.

§ *We must understand the nature of the problem.*

If the difficulty is comparatively mild, there are ways by means of which the individual can find help or help himself. Our study has revealed many leads by which this may be accomplished. Mention may be made of a few of the more important ones. The first of these is *understanding*. One of the greatest aids in overcoming any psychological difficulty is to be found in an understanding of its nature.

When your automobile stalls on the road, you do not get out and throw gasoline over it because you have heard that the engine needs gasoline in order to run. Nor do you get out and open the hood and try to persuade it that it ought to run. Nor do you hammer on various parts of the engine indiscriminately in the hope that your hammering will correct the trouble. Such behavior appears ridiculous when applied to an automobile engine, and yet it is just about what we have been doing with a far more delicate and complicated piece of machinery—the human organism. Before we can hope to correct or improve the performance of an automobile engine, we must understand the principles underlying its operation and the functions of the various parts in producing the observed results. With such an understanding, we are in a position to diagnose the car's faulty performance and take intelligent measures to remedy it. The same state of affairs exists in connection with the behavior of an individual. Before we are in a position to remedy undesirable patterns of behavior, we must understand something about the fundamental conditions that produce them.

We must know about the individual's needs and their operation, as well as the various psychological functions that determine the channels into which their energy is to be directed. Without such knowledge, we are blindly groping our way along, hammering indiscriminately on the surface of a delicately adjusted apparatus, behaving in a highly irrational manner and usually doing more harm than good. An understanding of the dynamics of behavior is, therefore, the first and most important requirement for any intelligent program designed to modify your own behavior patterns or those of other people.

As we have seen, this is only possible if we regard the individual as a dynamic system of needs that must be expressed and gratified in some form, whether social or unsocial. It seems safe to say that every individual strives to express his needs in a socially acceptable manner; only when he is prevented from doing so by other circumstances, does his behavior become unsocial. A detailed knowledge of the fundamental needs and their deflection from natural pathways through an interaction with the cultural forces is imperative, therefore, in any undertaking designed to modify one's own behavior. In the course of our training we have all been taught to regard certain normal, natural functions as shameful, disgusting, and indecent. As these natural functions still make claims on us in later life, we tend to regard them with horror and do our best to repress them. We are only too prone to regard ourselves as "bad," "indecent," or "perverted." These are irrational and unjustified super-ego condemnations. Most of us are neither as bad as we believe ourselves to be nor as good as we like to think we are. We all carry remnants and residues of our infancy into adult life, and we can save ourselves many feelings of shame, inferiority, and guilt by recognizing this fact.

¶ *We may substitute a new mode of behavior for the outworn or undesirable one.*

Such a program, if it is to be effective, must be flexible and many-sided. We must remember that the behavior in question, no matter what its nature, is the expression of a need, a fusion of needs, or a compromise between conflicting needs. Our greatest hope of modifying a particular pattern of behavior lies in the possibility of discovering a new mode of behavior that will express these needs more adequately in a socially accepted manner. This is not always easy. On the one hand we must ferret out the important needs which are determining the behavior in question, and on the other hand we must be able to evaluate the possibilities for gratifying these needs in other environmental situations. The individual must, then, be introduced into the proper situation in order that he may discover that it produces greater pleasures than the course he has been pursuing. When he has made this discovery, the old and undesirable mode of behavior disappears automatically.

A simple example may suffice to demonstrate this approach. After the severe bombings of England in 1940 W. L. White, an American newspaper correspondent visiting in London, decided to adopt an orphan child. Here is the story of ungratified needs for love and safety in a little girl three and a half years old, told not by a psychologist but by Mr. White himself: <sup>1</sup>

After I had finished my work in London, I went to a society which arranges adoptions and I was told that a little boy and a little girl would be brought in for me to look over.

Suddenly the boy is there before me—five-year-old John; reddish brown hair; holding in his hand one of those English

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<sup>1</sup> Condensed by *The Reader's Digest* from *Journey for Margaret*, copyright, 1941, by William L. White. By permission of Harcourt, Brace and Co., Inc.

schoolboy caps and clutching to his breast a shabby stuffed lamb. . . .

There stands the other child, tiny and fragile, in a little red coat, red leggings and a peaked pixie hood over blonde hair. Her small face is pinched tight with grief and despair, such an intense and naked emotion that I am almost embarrassed. "We don't know what to make of Margaret," says the secretary. "She's sulky, naughty, and won't eat."

Margaret's big black eyes, which do not quite dare to hope any more, rest on me for an instant. Then they search devouringly the faces of the women in the room, as primitively as a little calf searching for its mother. Now she does a curious thing. With one small palm and then the other she brushes one dry burning eye and then the other. A strange gesture. . . .

For advice I decide to telephone Anna Freud, daughter of the great psychiatrist, who maintains a rest center for children made homeless by the war. She agrees to let the two children stay a week at the rest center, to observe them carefully, and advise me which one to adopt.

As the children get in the taxi with me, Margaret crawls into my lap—not as a child does with a parent, but as a frightened animal might creep into the safety of a cave. John sits contentedly beside me. He points out the taxi window and laughs. "A bomb!" Then he stands with his nose against the window, counting the bombed houses.

Anna Freud has transformed an old mansion into a wartime kindergarten. . . . Margaret and John are greeted by gentle Hedy Schwarz, the kindergarten teacher. Again Margaret makes that eerie gesture, the palm of one little hand and then the other quickly brushing the dry burning eyes. Hedy leans down.

"If you would like to cry, Margaret, why don't you?" Margaret stares at Hedy to be sure she means it, then her tiny chest begins to heave.

"You—won't—smack—me?" she asks.

"No, we never spank little girls."

Margaret opens her mouth wide and lets out a voluptuous wail. As Hedy, kneeling, draws the child against her shoulder, Margaret relaxes into the luxury of long, loud howls dripping with tears. No longer do the frightened palms force back the tears. Hedy had guessed the reason for that gesture. After Mar-

garet's mother had been killed, she had been taken to a foster mother. Whenever she cried because she couldn't go back to her own mother, she had been smacked. So you must never cry for anything you have loved. You must push the tears back into the eyes.

"Imagine—punishing a child for crying!" storms Hedy. "To cry is as natural as to laugh. . . ."

"Will you sleep near us?" John demands. No, Hedy explains, Mr. White must go back to the hotel. Both children begin to cry.

"I want him to stay with us!" wails Margaret. So a bed is made for me in the room. After the children quiet down I strip to my shorts and crawl into bed. Six-thirty isn't my usual bedtime.

In the night I awake. To the north and coming nearer I hear a muffled hum—the desynchronized motors of a Heinkel bomber. Margaret moans in her sleep. John doesn't stir but Margaret wakes and sits up. I tiptoe over to her crib in the darkness. She stretches her hands out to me and I pick her up.

"When will it go away!" she asks. Her arms are tight around my neck.

"Very soon," I say calmly. Only I don't feel calm. . . .

Now the Heinkel has gone over, and the danger is past. Margaret relaxes, and I slip her back into her crib. "Tuck me in," she commands, with eyes closed.

I have decided that I want to take both children to America. But when I try to get passage for the three of us it is impossible to get even one extra seat on the plane which connects at Lisbon with American boats and clippers. . . . The Air Ministry agrees that I may take one child instead of my baggage, provided the child sits on my lap. But this means that only one child can go.

Only one. Which shall it be? With the help of Anna and Hedy, I at last make the decision. I decide to take Margaret. She is a very unusual child, says Hedy. . . .

Once when we stop at a station on our journey to Bournemouth where we are to take the plane, I go out on the platform. Suddenly I hear a scream of fright, and dash back to Margaret. "What's the matter, darling? Did you think I was going to leave you?" She nods solemnly. "Daddy won't ever leave you." She fights hard, but tears gush and she buries her head in



the collar of my trench coat. "That's right," I say, patting her softly, "go ahead and cry."

When we arrive at Bournemouth, I find that the flight has been delayed. . . . So we go shopping in the town. Margaret's outfit had seemed cute at first; now I see that it is worn, much too small, and there are holes in the soles of her shoes.

Margaret knows exactly what she wants—a blue coat, with matching hat and leggings. While I get my change, Margaret wanders to another showcase. There she spies Babar, a little stuffed elephant, exactly like the one in the book I had read to her and John.

Never after this is she quite so lonely. Babar has tea with us; Babar always has a spoonful of Margaret's cornflakes and a sip of her milk.

Last night she had no other toy except an empty incendiary bomb case which she had insisted on bringing along. It had fallen in her garden and had been her only plaything ever since. But tonight she takes Babar to bed with her, demanding that he also be kissed and tucked in.

"And you take the bomb," she says.

"Margaret, dear, I don't need the bomb."

Her face falls. "*I want* you to have it." She prefers Babar, yet she can't bear to think of the poor rejected bomb, sitting on the dresser, not in bed with anybody. . . .

And after seemingly endless days we enter New York Harbor. . . . On the pier is Kathrine, waiting for us both.

No longer, now, do we have to black-out Margaret's room, closing every curtain tightly before she will go to sleep, as we did in the first month. And at last she understands that no bombs ever drop out of the shiny transport planes that glitter overhead.

Sometimes it is true, old shadows rise. But they are only momentary, and come far less frequently now.

In such cases we need only provide a more adequate outlet for the choked needs, and the problem is solved. Here the environment (the war) was clearly at fault, and new gratification of Margaret's needs for love and safety was necessary to replace the lost parents and to make up for the misunder-

standing the child had met in foster homes. Clearly the little boy, John, was not in such dire need.

Even in adult life it is often necessary to manipulate the environment to fit the needs of the individual. A person may find himself in an occupation in which some of his needs cannot be gratified. It may be necessary for him to initiate a program of creating possibilities for their expression. Consider, for example, an individual with a strong need for achievement whose work is uncompetitive in nature and whose friends are not inclined to take part in sports because there are no adequate facilities in the neighborhood. The result will probably be that such an individual is forced by inner demands to compete with himself in his work, which is not particularly gratifying, or he might organize a campaign among his friends and associates to collect funds with which to build a tennis court or a ball field or a playground. If he succeeds in doing so, he will have manipulated the environment in such a way that a need which had to find artificial means of expressing itself can now be expressed in a more normal and gratifying manner.

Troublesome difficulties arise, as we have seen, not from a lack of opportunities for gratification in the environment, but from inner inhibitions that check the expression of certain needs. In these cases, we have no direct awareness of the need that is being blocked. All ideas, memories, and desires intimately related to the goal of the need are denied entry into consciousness, and we are left with little more than a feeling that something is lacking, together with a feeling of constraint and guardedness. We are constantly alert, on the *qui vive*, against certain types of situations that arouse in us emotions which we cannot understand and which refuse to obey the dictates of our rational judgments. The result is that we do things without knowing exactly why we are doing them, and when we try to control our actions, we find that

they do not submit easily to our conscious wishes. All logical arguments seem ineffective in bringing about an alteration in our behavior. The more we try to combat these effects, the more persistent they seem to become. The emotions arising from inhibited forms of need expression of this kind seem to us irrational and overpowering. They interfere with our efforts and often carry us into undesirable forms of behavior. Almost from the beginning of history, men have recognized the injurious nature of these emotions, and there are always some who advocate their complete suppression in order that man may live a life dictated by reason.

The solution, however, does not lie in suppression. It is true that by turning other needs against them, these emotions can be pushed out of consciousness and made to appear ineffective on the surface. But such measures are temporary. These emotions are indicators of large quantities of energy that are seeking an outlet. We can check the flow for a time by taking counter-measures, but we do not destroy the energy they represent. As time goes on, more and more energy must be withdrawn from useful tasks in order to keep the undesirable form of behavior from intruding. This costly procedure may partially succeed under ordinary circumstances, but only too often the individual finds that an unexpected situation takes him by surprise. Powerful emotions well up in him, take control of his behavior with disastrous results (mob action or hysteria, for example), and leave his finely cultivated rational way of living completely useless.

§ *We can harness our feelings for good purposes.*

Far better that new and socially accepted outlets for these emotions be found which can act as safety-valves. These emotions must be harnessed by providing adequate outlets for the energy inherent in them. When this is done, these emotions add vigor and value to our activities instead of hinder-

ing our efforts. Harnessed in this way, they can be brought under conscious control and made to serve the purposes of the ego. The problem is to find the proper outlets. Since we have no conscious knowledge of the goals toward which the need is directed, we cannot approach the problem in the same intelligent manner as in the foregoing case in which the ungratified need was known and the environment could be manipulated to provide opportunities for expression. Here we must work in a more random manner. We must not shrink from any new experiences. On the contrary, we must seek them out and participate in all kinds of activities even though, on the conscious level, they may not appeal to us immediately. Not knowing what the ungratified need is, we are in no position to know what activity may prove to be an outlet for its expression. When we have entered into a new activity with an open mind, we often discover that it holds hidden possibilities. To our amazement we find ourselves becoming interested in it and deriving pleasures from it. This can only mean that some of the energy of a blocked need is being sublimated and is finding some degree of satisfaction. The result is that inner tensions are reduced, and more energy can be turned into productive channels.

A motion-picture film revolved about the actions of a group of gangsters who took over the administration of a small village. The leader of the gang became the town manager; the arson expert became fire chief; another gangster was made chief of the police department; and so on. And they dispatched their new jobs with the same enthusiasm they had formerly applied to crime. The situation on the screen is, of course, humorous. But even such slight comedy has a moral: The characters in the story substituted social goals for the unsocial goals toward which their energy had previously been directed. They found new outlets for their needs.

Another illustration from life may help to clarify the manner in which this may operate. Henry Heymans had always considered golf as a pastime for sissies and old men. Since he wanted to be a real "he-man," he had carefully avoided any contact with the game and was absolutely sure that it was out of his line, and he would not like it. One day a girl, of whom he was very fond, suggested that they play golf with some of her friends. Henry was resistant and proposed several alternatives. But the girl's heart was set on playing golf with these friends, and Henry had to choose between playing or having her invite some other boy to take his place. He grudgingly chose the former.

After hitting a few balls very awkwardly, Henry suddenly discovered that there was more to it than he had at first supposed. In spite of all he thought he had against the game, he found himself really liking it and getting considerable satisfaction out of it. From that time on, Henry played a lot of golf. Before long he won the reputation of being able to drive farther than almost any one else at the club. He was proud of his achievement and spent most of his leisure improving his game. Old prejudices were forgotten. He felt better and worked better—a fact which he attributed to the increased amount of exercise that he was getting. It is perfectly clear that Henry had found a new outlet for one of his needs.

The changes which a war effects in our environment illustrate the necessity for finding new outlets. Many of the things to which we are accustomed become unattainable luxuries, and adjustments must be made in every phase of living. If tennis, your favorite sport, is impossible because of a shortage of tennis balls, you may find gardening or bicycle-riding a good substitute and a new outlet for one of your needs. The many civilian activities in time of war are other opportunities for the gratification of needs. Ex-

amples of changes in diet are particularly numerous. Fruit without sugar, bread without butter, new meats, and new vegetables appear on the dining table, and we make the necessary adjustment. Perhaps you have always disliked a certain vegetable because of its consistency or its looks, in short, because of your emotional reaction to it. If other vegetables are scarce, you will be hungry enough to try the disliked food. And probably you are surprised to find that you like it. You have found a new outlet for your need for food.

And so it is with all of us. But if we are going to improve our present adjustment by finding substitute outlets of expression, we must not analyze the activities that bring us satisfaction too carefully. To do so is to shut the door on the very possibilities for which we are searching. To take advantage of these unconscious mechanisms, we must give ourselves freely to all kinds of activities and make what use we can of the opportunities they offer. An intellectual evaluation of the possibilities is futile because it is conducted by the ego which is also doing the avoiding. Sometimes those activities we consciously shun the most are the ones that would yield the greatest returns if we gave them a fair trial. The amount of spontaneous interest you have in the activity after such a trial, together with the satisfaction you get out of it, can be used as a measure of its sublimating qualities. All kinds of activities may serve in this capacity. Hobbies, sports, and arts are particularly fertile. The more of them we have, the better off we are. They prevent the internal pressures from reaching the danger point where they begin to break out in undesirable forms.

§ *We must bring the super-ego into harmony with reality.*

Our study has given us a fourth important clue by means of which we can improve our present form of adjustment. We have seen how important a suitable super-ego function is for the enjoyment of social living. When it is unsuited to the social group in which the individual lives, however, it can produce untold misery and almost completely cripple all efforts of making an adequate adjustment. It is, therefore, essential to utilize every means at our disposal to modify this function and bring it in closer harmony with the social reality. As we have seen, this cannot be done by conscious attempts on the part of the individual. It is primarily an emotional creation that does not respond readily to rational modifications. Any program undertaken with the view of modifying the super-ego must, therefore, be indirect and largely emotional in nature.

The super-ego, as we have seen, owes its existence to an identification with a person who, the individual believes, possesses the power and acceptance necessary to offer protection and security. The child incorporates the image of this person as his guide in striving to safeguard the gratification of his own needs, but the image is a distorted one, and the child soon discovers that some of his needs must remain unsatisfied, or else he invokes the displeasure of this inner authority. Either state is painful to him, and he seeks to evade the consequences by finding new outlets for some of his needs, while attempting to reduce the severity of his super-ego judgments. In order to accomplish the latter, he unconsciously carries over his identification to other persons in authority with whom he comes in contact. An identification can, however, be on the negative as well as on the positive side. If negative, emotions such as fear and hatred are

aroused by the person. The identification will then serve to strengthen these traits in the super-ego. The result will be that it becomes more severe in its edicts as well as its punishments and thereby hinders the individual's emotional development. Positive emotions, on the other hand, tend to strengthen the love aspects of the super-ego function and make it more flexible, tolerant, and merciful. The needs are thereby given more leeway in seeking gratification and expression. The personality, by such means, acquires a richness, fullness, and tolerance—prerequisites for wholesome social living.

¶ *The significance of identification calls for contacts with many fine people.*

It is, therefore, of prime importance for the growing child to establish warm emotional bonds with older persons whom he can respect, admire, and in whom he can place confidence. Teachers, ministers, scout leaders, physicians, and coaches are particularly suited for this purpose. If an honest, sincere, and open attachment with such persons can be formed, marked changes in the super-ego structure may take place. Each change of this sort tends to make the super-ego a little more human in its attitudes and judgments, and a more satisfactory guide for the future. The original identification is not overthrown by these later ones. It remains intact to a large degree, and it continues to serve as the foundation of the super-ego. But each subsequent identification tends to be amalgamated with this original image to form a composite in which common factors are accentuated while exaggerations and peculiarities are obliterated. After a number of successive identifications of this sort, the original image is tempered and drowned out sufficiently to enable the individual to move freely and advantageously within the framework of his culture. The more identifications of this



kind we can make in the course of growing up, the more adequate will be our final adjustment. We should, therefore, not shrink from experiences of this kind but should, on the contrary, cultivate them as far as possible.

We must not forget, however, that every individual is unique and that the patterns adopted by one rarely, if ever, completely fit the needs of another. Sometimes it happens that even a composite image of persons with whom we have identified is not adequate as a nucleus for the integration of the individual's personality forces. Although adequate in many respects, it fails to give place to one or more strong tendencies. Not infrequently it happens that great characters in fiction can, through identification, offer a more suitable model. Roberta Cole can serve as an example. She grew up into adolescence as a well-adjusted child who was noted for her sympathetic attitudes and kindness. Her home environment was excellent, and her relations with most of her teachers had been happy and profitable. But something seemed to be lacking which she could neither grasp consciously nor understand. She stood high in her classes, and everybody expected much of her in the future. The difficulty was that Roberta did not know what she wanted to do later on in life. She had investigated the careers open to her, and although she had nothing particularly against them, they did not seem to be very impelling, alluring, or absorbing.

One day, quite by chance, she happened to read the story of the life of Florence Nightingale. Her interest in this personality became so great that she could scarcely put the book down long enough to eat her meals. It seemed as though she were actually reliving the life of Florence Nightingale—so deep was her emotional response. When she finished the book, her mind was made up. She would follow in the footsteps of Florence Nightingale as nearly as conditions would

permit. The identification was lasting, and Roberta is well on her way to becoming a leader in public-health nursing.

Literature, motion pictures, and drama—in addition to offering opportunities for identification—also have the advantage of portraying people engaged in the business of living. We see them in life situations engaged in serious emotional conflicts which fundamentally are like our own. Here we can learn about people and the ways in which they have solved their conflicts. The author supplies us with details which are not always available in our contacts with real people. They help us to understand the motivations behind certain forms of behavior and the factors that determine the outcome. We can profit tremendously by the experiences of others without exposing ourselves to their dangers. Each great character can teach us important facts about people and thereby help our understanding of them as well as of ourselves. At the same time, we are able to derive some vicarious gratification for our own needs which, at the present time, are not being granted adequate expression.

§ *Personality is complex.*

The structure of a personality is far too complicated to be modified by any easy or short-cut methods. Sometimes such methods seem to succeed as far as a single symptom or undesirable form of behavior is concerned. Detailed investigation shows, however, that every such success is purchased at a heavy price. Instead of really improving the individual's adjustment, these short-cut methods only shift the difficulty from one place to another. In the long run, it will be found that permanent and beneficial results can only be obtained by considering the ego's function in relation to the underlying needs, to the super-ego, and to the environment. If the ego's sphere of activity is to be increased or its position

strengthened, it can only be done by making modifications in one or more of these three diverse sets of forces which impinge upon it. To accomplish this requires understanding, tolerance, and patience.

¶ *We can make life better for ourselves and for our children.*

We must realize, however, that our responsibility does not end at this point. To improve our own present forms of adjustment by using every possible means at our disposal is, perhaps, our first task but not our last. We are not the end-product of our civilization or the world. Many generations will come after us. They are our responsibility. Are we content to pass on, through future identifications with ourselves, our personal shortcomings, our inadequate adaptations, our insecurities, our prejudices, hatreds, fears, guilts, and ignorance? Scarcely a single one of us would wish to do so. Whatever our lives may be at the moment, we all have a secret and implicit faith in the capacity of man to make the world a better place in which to live. We all hope that our children may be among those who will inhabit it and that they will find a greater degree of happiness than we, ourselves, have been able to find.

But faith is not enough. We must do something to turn that faith into reality. Most of our parents have made attempts in this direction. As we have seen, many of them have missed their target. In the false belief that such things as wealth, position, college educations, comforts, outer security, and so on are the vehicles to happiness, they have slaved and saved to provide them for us. We now know that these are relatively unimportant. What really counts is the inner security obtained through an adequate integration of our fundamental needs into a stable and social personality—

a personality built on love, tolerance, and understanding, able to utilize the opportunities for the expression of its needs to the fullest.

It is extremely important that we direct our efforts toward developing individuals of this type. There is every reason to suppose that a democracy can survive only if its backbone is composed of broad-visioned and well-adjusted individuals who have sufficient security in themselves to give generously to others, to observe the rules of fair play, and to be tolerant of the individual differences found among us all. A democracy is no stronger than the human relations existing among its individual members. These are the foundations on which it is built and the only way we know of at the present time in which man can really hope to win his freedom.

This means, however, that we must guide our future efforts in the direction of providing the child with the internal prerequisites rather than the external ones alone. In order to do this it becomes our obligation to improve our own adjustment as much as possible since we, as we are, will automatically become the nucleus to the future by means of identification. Unless we wish to stunt the future with our own more or less limited personalities, we must have the courage to face ourselves as we are and throw off the shackles of our past. We must also modify and improve our methods of infant training, our relationships with our children, our educational system, our disciplinary techniques, and our legal set-up. In brief, we must revamp our culture. We must examine it from the point of view of the needs of the child which must have outlets for expression if the individual is to live a happy and wholesome life.

It is a horrible condemnation of our civilization that technical knowledge has advanced to the point where its achievements border on the miraculous, while our knowledge of

man has remained at almost a medieval level. Tremendous bridges, skyscrapers, tunnels, steamships, airplanes, and what not are designed and built with the greatest precision. We can predict with astounding accuracy the future events of the astronomical universe, but we can scarcely make a beginning at shaping the lives of the individuals who are to use them. Little wonder that aggression is rampant in the world today. The inventions of our sciences are being turned to the destruction of thousands and hundreds of thousands of human beings who might have enjoyed them to the advantage of everybody had they been given a better opportunity.

The problem merits the best thought and effort that we can give to it. No greater challenge ever confronted mankind. The higher our civilization rises, the more vital it becomes. Man can meet this challenge as he has solved other knotty problems in the past, but it will take every bit of ingenuity, patience, tolerance, and understanding that he can command. To master this enigma, to create a world of people who can and want to live in peace with themselves and others, should be the goal of a twentieth-century crusade greater than any of the noble efforts written in the long history of man!



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